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**Governing Through Networks: Participation Dynamics in
New Deal for Communities**

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Award date:
2010

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Governing Through Networks: Participation Dynamics in New Deal for Communities

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

University of Bath

Department of Social and Policy Sciences

March 2010

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Acknowledgements

With thanks to my supervisors Graham Room and Karen Rowlingson for their support, guidance, critical feedback and patience over the years. With thanks to my panel members Martin Evans, Tess Ridge and Susan Harkness for all their constructive comments. With thanks also to Emma Carmel for her engagement with and enthusiasm for my PhD and other projects whilst at Bath, and for many helpful discussions.

With thanks to East Manchester NDC officers who facilitated and supported my research project. With thanks to all the research participants of East Manchester, to the regeneration officers, residents, local authority and public service employees who generously gave their time for the research in interviews and who supplied other data. With thanks to all for the privilege of sharing a year in the life of East Manchester.

With thanks to colleagues in the Social and Policy Sciences Department in Bath, in particular the Governance Research Group for their discussion and support throughout our time as PhD students. With thanks also to Tina Haux who provided helpful comments on a draft of this thesis.

With thanks also to my friends, family and church for their support, without which the completion of this thesis would not have been possible.

Abstract

This thesis examines participation in local decision making for public services in the context of changing modes of governance in Britain. The impact of resident participation on local public services through a regeneration partnership is explored through a focus on how participation processes operate in a governance network context.

Governance reforms in Britain have provided new opportunities for citizens to participate in public policy decision making. In particular, urban regeneration partnerships such as New Deal for Communities have been designed to promote local resident participation and also to reorient local services to be more closely aligned with resident needs, and thereby to reduce social exclusion. This has presented opportunities for residents to influence local public services; this type of participation outcome has received little attention however. This thesis argues that urban regeneration partnerships can be understood as a type of governance network which create opportunities for resident participation, and that a more detailed understanding of 'network' aspects of governing can explain some of the processes and outcomes of resident participation in this context.

The research was carried out through an ethnographic case study of a New Deal for Communities programme, in East Manchester. A 'theory of change' framework was used to explore participation processes and outcomes in detail. The research found that certain individuals acted as 'brokers' through whom processes of influence operated. The more personal aspects of the relationships, or 'strong ties', between them were also significant. Resident influence through network governing was largely restricted to the local level however, and was unstable.

This thesis makes a contribution to understanding how participation processes operate in an urban regeneration context and how they may lead to changes in public services. The thesis also makes a theoretical contribution by exploring how governance network processes may operate through brokers and network ties.

Glossary

ABI	Area Based Initiative
BURA	British Urban Regeneration Association
CAB	Citizen's Advice Bureau
CASE	Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion
CCSR	Cathie Marsh Centre for Census and Survey Research
CEF	Community Empowerment Fund
CEN	Community Empowerment Network
CNR	Centre for Neighbourhood Research
COGS	Communities and Organisations Growth and Support (Consultancy)
CPA	Comprehensive Performance Assessment
CPO	Compulsory Purchase Order
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CRESR	Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research
CSV	Community Service Volunteers
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DETR	Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions
DoH	Department of Health
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EOC	Environment On Call
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
GO	Government Office
HAZ	Health Action Zone
HMR	Housing Market Renewal
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation
ISER	Institute for Social and Economic Research
ITDG	Intermediate Technology Development Group
JRF	Joseph Rowntree Foundation
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LAA	Local Area Agreement
LAP	Local Action Partnership
LSE	London School of Economics and Political Science
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
MCC	Manchester City Council
NAO	National Audit Office
NCVO	National Council for Voluntary Organisations
NDC	New Deal for Communities
NEM	New East Manchester
NRF	Neighbourhood Renewal Fund
NRS	Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy
NRU	Neighbourhood Renewal Unit
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PAF	Public Agencies Forum
PCSO	Police Community Support Officer
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PSA	Public Service Agreement
SEM	Street Environment Manager

SEU	Social Exclusion Unit
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SRB	Single Regeneration Budget
URC	Urban Regeneration Company

PART ONE

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of Study

The subject of this thesis is public participation in the governance of local public services. ‘Participation’ is a high profile, normative concept which has wide acceptance as a policy tool and is analysed extensively in its application, yet the question of ‘what difference does it make?’ receives surprisingly little scrutiny. The effect of public participation on the quality of public services is a particularly neglected area. This, it is argued, is a relevant concern for residents living in deprived areas who have been the subject of participatory initiatives to a greater extent than the British population in general, through area-based initiatives such as regeneration programmes. They have a significant stake in how public services are run since their participation in the governing of public services could potentially change and improve those services and thereby reduce levels of deprivation and social exclusion. They are encouraged to be model citizen volunteers by participating in local governing for these services, and yet they have no assurances that these services will be adequately assessed for change or improvement as a result.

The impact of participation on public services through regeneration programmes has not been researched to any great extent, partly because participation has often been promoted as a ‘good thing’ without need for justification, and partly because there are methodological challenges in assessing the outcomes of participation. However, the effect of participation is an important issue for both policy makers, who devote additional resources to participatory approaches in order to reduce social exclusion, and to residents who devote their time and energy in order to bring about change in their local area. The thesis examines the processes and outcomes of participation in local decision making for public services in deprived areas, adopting a governance network perspective to explore how regeneration programmes operate as networks and how they might produce change. Governance network perspectives have been used to describe the interaction of participants in governing within structural arrangements which create both

opportunities and constraints for actors. Explanations of governing dynamics have thus far tended to be structural rather than actor-oriented, and have tended to describe institutional constraints and lack of change. Social network theory, which employs the concepts of nodes (discussed in this study as ‘brokers’) and ties, is adopted here to explain governance network dynamics. This approach takes a more actor-oriented approach, describing interactions in more detail and can be used within governance perspectives to explain governing processes and change.

The role of resident participation in local governing within a context of social exclusion raises empirical and theoretical questions: what impact does resident participation in governing have, and how do governance networks function to constrain or enable resident influence? The aim of this thesis is to explore and explain the dynamics of a governance network with respect to resident participation and influence in governing, with reference to brokers and network ties within its institutional context. The research question for this thesis is: how can the influence which residents may exercise on public services, through their participation in governance networks, be explained by reference to the role of brokers and network ties?

1.2 Policy Area

This study examined the influence that residents of deprived areas have over local public services, primarily through participation in area-based regeneration programmes. Regeneration programmes are targeted at geographical areas of deprivation and deliver a variety of services and development initiatives in order to reduce social exclusion, through direct project funding but also through reorienting mainstream services. These programmes have increasingly emphasised local resident participation since the mid-1990s (Hastings et al., 1996; SEU, 2001; ODPM, 2005a), one aim of which is to improve decision making for public services at the local level. Resident participation in regeneration programmes has been implemented in a context where participatory policies have also been implemented within public services and local authorities.

Participation and regeneration policies have drawn on various concepts which have emphasised the engagement of citizens, as a homogenous community, taking responsibility for problems in their local area, partly within a managerialist project of

improving the efficiency and effectiveness of public services. Other factors contributing to social exclusion such as wider structural issues have been underplayed, as has the potential for participation to create or expose tensions between different groups.

1.3 Theoretical Perspectives

Participation is located, for the purposes of this study, within a wider theoretical framework of governance perspectives which addresses trends towards the inclusion of non-state actors in governing. Participation in regeneration partnerships can be conceptualised as participation in governance networks, where local government, the private sector, voluntary group, and local residents participate in governing at the local level, although steered by central government. These partnerships can be conceptualised as governance networks in the sense that they are actors and institutions bound in a network of ‘loose ties’ which produce public policy and services through distinctive governing processes.

Participation dynamics within governance networks can be conceptualised as being dependent on institutional rules and cultures; these may present constraints for resident participation and influence. However, governing processes are also dependent on the choices and behaviours of individual actors within the network and these may provide opportunities for resident influence. The importance of actors in governing processes points to a theoretical framework which goes beyond describing institutional environments and can describe and explain change that occurs through actors.

The concept of a ‘network’ has been relatively central to governance perspectives, and encompasses the notion of actors and their relationships with each other. There is scope to explore the ‘network’ aspects of governance networks in more detail, using social network theory and its concepts of nodes and ties, in order to gain an understanding of resident participation in governing and influence over public services. In particular, this thesis has explored hints in the literature that relationships between actors, including more affective, personal aspects of these relationships, also play a role in participation processes.

1.4 Methodology and Findings

Researching participation outcomes entails methodological challenges of firstly identifying outcomes and secondly, attributing these to processes; much research on participation has focused on one or the other. This study used a 'theory of change' conceptual framework to explore governing processes and outcomes in detail in a way that produces an explanation of how particular outcomes are achieved. In order to do this, the study required an in-depth methodological approach. It therefore employed an ethnographic, mixed-method case study approach using observation, interviews and quantitative data. A New Deal for Communities regeneration programme was selected as a case study and fieldwork was carried out over the period of one year. Thirty local meetings and four environmental patrols were observed, and forty participants in a regeneration programme were interviewed including regeneration officers, public service employees and local residents. Regeneration programme and local authority documents and local survey data were also analysed.

The findings of the study were that actors both shape the structure of regeneration programmes, as governance networks, and are instrumental in shaping the processes of resident participation and influence that occur within them. Particular actors functioned as bridges between estranged groups and brokered processes of influence through acting as communication channels and advocating for change. Furthermore, informal and peripheral spaces of the case study governance network were important sites of interaction for developing relationships; processes of influence did not always occur in meetings. Relationships between brokers changed over time, becoming more personal. This influenced how some public service employees behaved, through creating personal accountability for example. The case study regeneration programme could be understood as a governance network and this theoretical framework illuminated network processes to a greater extent compared to institutional approaches on their own. To summarise, an understanding of actors who behaved as brokers, and the nature of relationships between actors, was important for explaining the shape, processes and outcomes of resident participation in governance networks.

Resident influence through network brokers and relationships was generally limited to the local level, which had implications for how useful this approach would be for changing public services at a more strategic level and therefore how effective this

approach is for reducing social exclusion more broadly. While the story of residents' power being limited to the local level is a familiar one, and tends to end with the conclusion that residents living in deprived areas are disempowered, this was not always the perspective of residents. Local residents tended to be less interested in bigger political decisions or strategic issues in their area but had a high level of concern with their very immediate surroundings and issues. The implications of the use of governance networks for influencing public services - as demonstrated in the case study here - was therefore mixed: network contacts and relationships operated well for residents for whom local, close contacts were easier to work with than attending formal meetings, but also reflected larger patterns of exclusion from decision making which had a more substantial influence on social exclusion.

1.5 Contribution of Study

This study provides a detailed examination of how participation operates within a regeneration programme, and illustrates how network processes were overlaid on institutional arrangements in this setting. It thus provides an insight into the dynamics of regeneration programmes and participation from a governance network perspective. The thesis attempts to add to knowledge in two areas: how participation might impact on public services and how understanding participatory governing processes in terms of networks might explain how this occurs. It opens up possibilities for future research to explore other participation processes in terms of network brokers and ties. This thesis also has policy implications for complex area-based programmes in what works when involving local residents, and how they engage with new forms of governing. The thesis advocates an ethnographic approach to researching public policy, specifically for researching participation processes and outcomes but also to explore policy processes in more depth, especially at the state-citizen interface.

1.6 Chapter Outline

The thesis is split into two sections: the first four chapters deal with the policy area of regeneration and participation, the theoretical perspective and methodology while the

second part of the thesis comprises of a further four chapters which present the empirical data and discuss the implications of the findings.

Chapter Two reviews the literature on participation, its relevance to social exclusion and public services in deprived areas, its history and context in policy and also its conceptualisation, considering the issues of power and empowerment. This is followed by an exploration of participatory approaches within regeneration programmes in Britain and a critique of the characterisation of participation in regeneration in terms of the 'good community' and 'responsibilized citizen' within a managerialist policy framework. Chapter Three explores the dynamics of resident participation in the context of governance perspectives through a discussion of institutional approaches and a detailed exploration of brokers and ties in governance networks. It concludes that the role of actors and the relationships between them need to be more explicit in governance approaches. Chapter Four examines various approaches to researching the impact of participation, and critiques survey and evaluation approaches in terms of how well they explain participation outcomes. A 'theory of change' approach is advocated as a conceptual framework which examines participation in a way that explains processes and outcomes together. The methodological approach adopted is then set out: a mixed methods case study using an ethnographic approach is described, and issues such as site selection and ethics are discussed. This overall conceptual and methodological approach, it is argued, is needed in order to capture the detail of processes and outcomes in governance networks.

Chapter Five describes how the case study regeneration programme was set up and how institutional factors affected the dynamics of resident participation and influence. Chapter Six describes the role of individuals who acted as 'brokers' who both built bridges between actors and also intervened on their behalf. The chapter then goes on to describe how brokers shaped the regeneration programme as a network with peripheral, informal spaces. Finally, the chapter describes how network ties between actors in the network changed over time. Chapter Seven reports findings on the outcomes of resident participation in the case study regeneration programme, and explores how the role of brokers and changed relationships brought about changes in public services. This is explained within the context of resident aspirations and evidence for any changes which occurred in services, particularly environmental services which were selected as a sub-case study. Chapter Eight provides a discussion of the findings, arguing that in order to

understand participation outcomes in governance networks and understanding of brokers and network ties is necessary. It notes limitations to resident participation in the case study: that although the programme provided opportunities for residents to influence public services, the use of network brokers and ties was unstable and was limited to the local level. The methodological implications are then addressed and a defence of an ethnographic approach is made, arguing that such an approach is necessary to understand the detail of network processes. Lastly, the policy implications are discussed, that within local governance structures the informal processes of brokering and relationship-building in local governing produce change and that this needs recognition and protection in order to promote resident influence.

2 Regeneration, Communities and the Active Citizen

2.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the policy area of interest for this thesis: the implementation of participatory policies, under New Labour, within regeneration programmes. Regeneration initiatives are an example of governing structures at the local level which promote the participation of local residents in local governing processes. Resident participation as ‘participation in governing’, however, will be explored in detail in the following chapter. This chapter outlines regeneration programmes and participatory policies in Britain and, following this, examines how ‘participation’ has been constructed within regeneration policies using notions of deprived areas, the good community and the active citizen, and which has been implemented within a managerialist framework.

2.2 Social Exclusion, Participation and Regeneration

This chapter explores the policy areas of social exclusion, participation and regeneration. Participation policies and regeneration programmes have been implemented as policy solutions to areas of deprivation or social exclusion. These areas represent concentrated areas of social exclusion which display a combination of problems such as low employment, dissatisfaction with the area and local public services, high crime, a poor environment, poor housing, health problems, and so on. Social policy responses have conceptualised social exclusion as a multi-faceted and interrelated social problem, targeting these issues within integrated initiatives such as regeneration programmes. Participatory policies are a further policy response designed to enhance these initiatives in various ways, such as engaging the targets of such initiatives to a greater degree and improving the relevance and effectiveness of interventions.

Public services in deprived areas are a very relevant issue for social exclusion since services are a significant asset for residents of these areas and have the potential to reduce various aspects of social exclusion. Regeneration programmes are partly aimed

at improving local public services, and resident participation within regeneration programmes ought to result in greater resident influence over local public services. Residents of deprived areas are also often distanced from public services which may be largely staffed by people from outside the area and from a different socio-economic background. Residents may also find services difficult to engage with, if they are not delivered in an accessible way for example. This represents a distance between the state and the citizen while at the same time citizens increasingly expect more from the state in terms of public services which the state is unable to deliver. In response, New Labour has attempted to renegotiate this relationship, to bring the state and citizen closer together by reforming public services through expanding the group of actors who are involved in governing. New Labour has restated the relationship between the state and the citizen with respect to public services, announcing:

...the beginning of a new relationship between citizens and public institutions. It signals commitment from across the Government to build the capacity of communities to influence public policies and services, and to develop more opportunities for that capacity to be exercised.

(Civil Renewal Unit, 2005: 29)

Regeneration programmes represent one policy area in which this has been implemented and have created opportunities for reducing social exclusion through participation in governing for local public services.

However, participation has often been welcomed as being beneficial without a clear understanding of what this benefit is (Burton et al., 2006). Participation policies are often implemented with a wide range of policy aims but the impact of participation has tended to be a neglected area. However, residents tend to be motivated primarily by what difference participating will make to their lives, and this issue is especially relevant for those in deprived areas who feel less able to influence services than others: there is a demand for involvement in decision making for services among those living with social exclusion (Cochrane, 2006). The chance to influence motivates participation: Docherty et al. (2001) found in a comparative case study that participation levels were higher if residents believed their participation was having an effect. This is true in many contexts, for example the World Bank's Voices of the Poor project identified lack of voice and influence as one concern of the poor (Narayan et al., 2000). From a policy

perspective, services and decision making are increasingly being designed to be sensitive to input from local people, particularly in deprived areas. Resident participation is therefore important to understand, both in terms of whether and how residents influence public services. This study takes as its basis the concern of residents that voicing their aspirations for public services should have an actual effect or outcome on those services, referred to in this thesis as ‘resident influence’.

Since the interest here is decision making for local public services, this thesis will be examining participation from a public administration perspective. Participation at the local level could also be analysed from a political perspective since it can be conceptualised as a form of participatory or deliberative democracy, where local residents are involved more directly in local decision making, in meetings and so on, rather than electing representatives to make these sorts of decisions for them. However, the argument for this thesis centres on the relationship between citizens and the state at a local level with respect to public agencies and public services; these relate to public administration concerns rather than wider political issues although, of course, the two are related.

2.3 Regeneration Policies and Participation

This section outlines how participation has been adopted in urban regeneration programmes and in local services in Britain. Regeneration programmes have aimed to reduce social exclusion in particular locations of concentrated deprivation. Participation has been adopted in this policy area as means for residents to influence not only the programmes themselves but also local services, and thereby to reduce social exclusion.

2.3.1 History of Regeneration

The majority of current UK area-based regeneration programmes fall under the auspices of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal which was launched in 2001 (SEU, 2001), following the Social Exclusion Unit’s ‘Bringing Britain Together’ report (SEU, 1998) and the establishment of the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) in 2000. The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (NRS) marked a shift in regeneration policy

towards a longer-term and more embedded commitment to tackling area-based deprivation (Lupton, 2003). Regeneration partnerships have been part of recent urban policy since the 1970s although early forms of urban regeneration existed in the late 1800s, focusing on housing redevelopment (Ball and Maginn, 2005). Historically, area-based regeneration programmes had had varying emphases on economic and social development under different governments (Lupton, 2003): in general earlier regeneration programmes had given priority to private sector involvement and infrastructure projects but an increasing recognition emerged that social as well as economic factors were critical in transforming areas (HM Treasury, 2000; Kleinman, 2000). There has, however, been some shift back towards an emphasis on physical infrastructure and the overall economic performance of areas within which disadvantaged neighbourhoods are located (Cameron, 2006b).

An additional development occurred in the late 1990s when regeneration programmes became more integrated with other policies of agencies¹ as well as partnerships at the local level (Hall and Mawson, 1999; Hull, 2000). This was facilitated by the decentralisation of services which allowed greater local involvement (Hart et al., 1997). More joined-up ways of working also extended to the national level (Russell, 2001; Wallace, 2003) and derived from a recognition that different facets of social exclusion, such as poor housing, high unemployment and low educational attainment, are interrelated or at least tend to be concentrated in the same local areas, and that projects and services would be more effective if they were better coordinated locally. Urban regeneration initiatives have therefore funded projects in those areas where social exclusion has been concentrated and which displayed marked differences between the most deprived areas and national averages in economic activity, poor housing, health, low quality physical environments, and high levels of crime. Regeneration therefore became organised around partnerships designed to address multi-faceted, local problems.

¹ The term 'agencies' is used here to refer to public or statutory bodies, public service departments or organisations, or voluntary organizations delivering public services, except where otherwise specified.

2.3.2 Partnership and Participation

Participatory approaches have undergone a recent resurgence in the UK, from the City Challenge programme in the mid-1990s through to programmes falling under New Labour's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy which was launched in 1998. Different strands of participation policies were brought together under the 'Together We Can' initiative which was launched in 2005 (Civil Renewal Unit, 2005). This consolidated public engagement work being carried out by various government departments across a range of policy areas such as education and health.

While participation opportunities have expanded since the 1990's, participation policies can be traced back to the 1960s in the UK (Richardson, 1983; SEU, 1998). They were adopted by the Community Development Projects in the late 1960s (Foley and Martin, 2000) and through increasing levels of tenant participation in the 1970s (Blackman, 1995; Hyatt, 1997; Tunstall, 2001). Ideas about participation have also been evident in international development since the 1980s, critiquing 'top-down' approaches (Chambers, 1993; Cooke and Kothari, 2001); this philosophy has also been articulated in UK policy, where local participation and influence has been contrasted to 'top down' initiatives:

Too much has been imposed from above, when experience shows that success depends on communities themselves having the power and taking the responsibility to make things better.

(SEU, 1998: 107)

Regeneration programmes have tended to adopt participatory principles in the language of 'partnership': they are required to work in partnership at the local level, combining the efforts of national and local government, statutory agencies, the private sector, voluntary organisations and local residents, based on an ethos of 'working together' to meet local needs. This is based partly on the idea that more is accomplished by people working together than in 'silos' (Hastings et al., 1996). They are also perceived to be more sustainable (Wilkinson and Appelbee, 1999). Actual structures of organisations and partnerships vary by local authority area and partly depend on the history of partnerships and previous regeneration activity (Edwards et al. 2000). The participation of local residents as members of these partnerships was more actively promoted in City

Challenge in 1990s and the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) in 1993 (Atkinson and Cope, 1997). This shift occurred in response to criticisms of the quality of previous regeneration efforts which were seen lacking relevance to local community needs (HM Treasury, 2000; Kleinman, 2000).

Residents have been included as one 'partner' in regeneration: the rationale for participation being employed that participation from local residents improves the relevance and effectiveness of public policy for the 'wicked issues' of social exclusion (Richardson and Mumford, 2002):

Communities need to be consulted and listened to, and the most effective interventions are often those where communities are actively involved in their design and delivery.

(SEU, 2001: 51)

Regeneration programmes have therefore been increasingly required by central government to promote resident or service-user participation (ODPM, 2004; Miliband, 2005). However, assumptions about the value in itself of participation has led to a lack of evaluation in urban regeneration, spanning the political divide (Ball and Maginn, 2005).

2.3.3 Regeneration Programmes

The three main regeneration initiatives under New Labour have been the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme, Neighbourhood Management and New Deal for Communities (NDC). These have aimed to reduce social exclusion at a local level through partnership working, resident participation and working with local services. The Neighbourhood Renewal Programme was particularly focused on areas that fell furthest below national averages for deprivation indicators in areas such as health and educational performance, aiming to reduce the gap between local areas of concentrated poverty and deprivation and other areas. The Neighbourhood Management Programme made provisions for local residents to run their own services, manage local budgets, and negotiate with local and national government (SEU, 2001) through a Neighbourhood Manager, a person or organisation acting as a single point of contact and taking

responsibility for addressing local issues (SEU, 2000) and who would communicate with service providers about local residents' wishes (ODPM, 2005a).

Launched in 1999, New Deal for Communities was New Labour's first major area-based programme aimed at addressing social exclusion and received significant funding: distributing £2 billion over ten years (ODPM, 2005c) in 39 deprived areas, amounting to around £50M each. The 39 local areas were identified as those which had low scores on the Index of Multiple Deprivation² (ODPM, 2005c) rather than gaining funding through competitive bidding as predecessors such as the City Challenge programme had done. NDC areas were relatively small, covering between 1000-4000 households, with an average population of 9800 (Lawless, 2006a). NDC programmes were structured as partnerships which distributed their own funding but were also required to encourage services to work more closely together instead of in 'silos' (Coaffee and Deas, 2008), to 'bend' or reorient local services. Like Neighbourhood Renewal and Neighbourhood Management, NDC aimed to reduce social exclusion identified by deprivation indicators, and also to coordinate local services according to local needs. NDC however was specifically structured to promote resident participation as part of the programme design, in that NDC boards had to be made up of at least 50% residents. The focus of programmes on 'bending' mainstream services and the participation of residents therefore provided an opportunity for residents to influence local public services.

2.3.4 Regeneration in Local Context

The local context of public services underwent development and reform over the period of change affecting regeneration programmes, discussed above, with implications for how public services respond to resident participation. Local government has been a significant, though not sole, player in the provision of local services and its role has changed under New Labour's administration, with an increasing emphasis on devolution and decentralisation. The 'new localism' was a decentralising agenda of New Labour through, for example, the Local Government Act of 2000. This act required local authorities to include local people in decision making to a greater degree

² A composite indicator incorporating the following weighted domains: income; employment; health deprivation and disability; education, skills and training; housing; living environment; and crime (Office for National Statistics, 2009).

and gave local authorities more flexibility to act to promote the well being of communities (Wilson, 2005). Devolution through local authorities was intended to give greater emphasis on more localised involvement in decision making, sometimes referred to as 'double devolution' from central to local government, and from local government to local residents. Local authorities were seen by central government as having a key role in the participation agenda because they are closer to local people than national government (Civil Renewal Unit, 2005) but as requiring further devolution since they were seen as being too distant from the local communities they served, unable to deliver relevant services (Burgess et al., 2001). They were therefore required to engage with local communities to a greater extent (e.g. ODPM, 2006b). Public services such as the NHS have also incorporated participatory practices, although usually in the form of 'user participation' rather than on a community basis, and with varying degrees of success (Simmons and Birchall, 2005). It should be noted that, as with regeneration and participation not being particularly new phenomena, the reconfiguration of the relationship between service users and the state also has a longer history (Clarke, 2007).

A key feature of local governance in England had been Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), introduced in 2001, designed to coordinate services in local authority areas and to oversee regeneration programmes. LSPs are made up of a local authority, statutory sector agencies (such as social services, education, and the police), the private sector, voluntary organisations, community groups and local residents. LSPs partly solved the problem of multiplicities of local partnerships (Corry and Stoker, 2002) by being designed to provide a single partnerships structure, as the overall trend towards partnerships had created multiple, overlapping and confusing local arrangements (HM Treasury, 2000). They function as local deliberative forums to bring various sectors to work together on local issues, often with subgroups responsible for different thematic or geographical areas. LSPs are required to draw up Community Strategies, coordinated plans for services in each local authority area, covering existing statutory services as well as new programmes. They provide a structure within which participation takes place locally and are critical in this process since they are required to devolve power to smaller local groups (often called 'area committees') to give a 'voice' to and an opportunity for local residents to influence local decision making and local services (SEU, 2001). While they have a local participatory focus, LSPs are also managed by regional government, through accreditation (ODPM, 2002) and through having to

produce Public Service Agreements (PSAs) together with local services (ODPM, 2002).

This emphasis on participation and localism has produced tensions with centralising tendencies (Coaffee, 2005). Local authorities and services have been increasingly required to report performance standards to central government and have also been subject to monitoring regimes and national inspectorates, though this has abated somewhat from a peak (Corry and Stoker, 2002). Performance regimes for local government have changed over time, for example when NDC was launched 'Best Value' was in place but in 2001 PSAs were introduced by government. These comprised various targets based on local priorities but also had the aim of monitoring reductions in gaps in health, crime and so on between the most deprived areas and the rest of England. This type of incentive to public agencies has produced pressures on services which are potentially in conflict with resident participation.

2.3.5 Summary

This section has explored participation policies in the context of regeneration programmes. The key features of regeneration programmes, including NDC, have been outlined, with particular emphasis on participation and partnership working. The emphasis on local participation in local authorities has also been explored.

2.4 Regeneration and Participation Concepts

The remainder of this chapter discusses how participation in regeneration programmes has been constructed in policy in a particular way. Firstly, various aims and rationales for participation exist and have been adopted in regeneration programmes and public services. Secondly, areas for regeneration have been identified in terms of deprivation and regeneration initiatives, and have targeted 'pathological communities' to a greater extent than focusing on any deficiencies that might exist in local public services. Thirdly, residents have been conceptualised both in terms of active citizens who volunteer for the social good and also as homogenous communities exhibiting social virtues, despite their 'pathological community' status. Lastly, participation has been

implemented using notions of community development but within a managerialist mode of public administration. New Labour's conceptualisation and implementation of participatory policies therefore exhibits various tensions between these various strands of ideas and discourse underpinning regeneration programmes.

2.4.1 Defining Participation in Governing

It is worth considering at this point what the term 'participation' might be used to refer to more precisely since the concept is a broad one and has been adopted in policies in a variety of ways. 'Participation' has been a popular concept, described as a 'hurrah' word (White, 1996) and implemented perhaps to a 'tyrannical' degree in some cases (Cooke and Kothari, 2001). It has almost universally held to be a 'good thing' but lacks clarity since it can be conceptualised and applied in a range of ways. Some definitions of participation are fairly broad and encompass a family of notions such as neighbourliness and community cohesion while others, such as voter participation, are quite narrow; some conceptualisations imply social benefits while others embody political aims; participation may also take place at the local, national or international level.

In its most basic sense, participation involves one or more persons joining or becoming part of a group or process. In a policy context, participation denotes some sort of communal activity such as volunteering, becoming a member of a group, or voting in an election or referendum. These are sorts of activities which indicate belonging and making a contribution to the social fabric and as such tend to carry normative weight. For the purposes of this thesis, the term is used here in the narrow sense of referring to participation in decision making for public services at a local level. Participation in policy making at the local level is sometimes distinguished from other types as 'civic participation' (e.g. Attwood et al., 2003). This is distinct from other types of participation such as belonging to community groups or volunteering. People may be involved in civic participation by virtue of being a tenant, a local resident, a citizen, a member of a group or community. In regeneration programmes such as New Deal for Communities, the programme of interest for this study, participants are identified by residency in a bounded local area, and are usually conceptualised as 'the community' although this, as will be discussed later, can cover many sub-groups.

2.4.1.1 Rationales for Participation

Identifying participation as involvement in decision making for public services leads to a consideration of its rationale. Participation may be promoted for a variety of rationales, often somewhat unclear and often overlapping with each other. For this study, Burton's (2004) notion of instrumental participation will be employed, following (Richardson, 1983) who categorizes the rationale for participation into three types: 'due process', 'developmental' and 'instrumental'. These three rationales are often unclear in both policies and in discussions about participation but point to different reasons for employing participatory policies.

'Due process' as a rationale for participation is based on the idea that people have a right to participate, that they have a right to have a say in decisions which affect them in various policy areas such as in their health care (Barnes, 1999). This is an ethical claim and can be framed as such, or as a political notion based on the rights of the citizen. Promoting access to decision making is a particular issue for residents of deprived areas who may have less voice in society, either because of low voter turnout or because policy makers are seen as being out of touch with what ordinary people want from services (Smerdon and Robinson, 2004). This rationale for participation is based on normative socio-political debates about the rights of the citizen.

The 'developmental' rationale for participation is the notion that the activities of participation improve individuals or communities, through building personal skills, confidence, trust or social cohesion, or reducing crime for example. This might be through attending meetings, getting to know people in the local community, learning about local policy processes, feeling more confident through working on joint projects, and so on. This is participation which brings about benefits for local residents rather than for any effect on external bodies. This can be promoted as a general good across society or one which implies deficiencies in deprived communities, where participation is needed in these particular areas to improve the community in some way. Additionally, this rationale can be used as part of a neo-liberal discourse of self-reliance (Lister, 2005), diverting attention away from broader structural issues which may also be relevant for deprived areas, and blaming the non-participant.

The instrumental aims of participation can be defined as the external effects, outcomes or impact of participatory activity. Within this rationale, residents participate in order to bring about change in something external to them, to influence and change local policies and services in this case. Involving beneficiaries is thought to improve the effectiveness of services (Hastings et al., 1996; ODPM, 2005a) based on the proposal that local people can assess their needs better than remote civil servants or professionals (Kleinman, 2000; Lister, 2004) and that this also increases the sustainability of programmes (SEU, 2001). This is seen to be especially true for deprived areas where there are additional difficulties delivering public services (Cabinet Office/ODPM, 2005). This rationale is distinct from the ‘due process’ and ‘developmental’ aims of participation but may build on them: for example, developing the capacity of local residents to participate may improve their ability to change public services.

Participation has been implemented in regeneration policy with a variety of overlapping rationales, to increase community cohesion, to reduce crime, to improve services and so on. However, the area of interest for this thesis is the instrumental aspect of participation and whether opportunities for resident influence result in impact on local public services, and will be the rationale focused on here.

2.4.2 Deprived Areas

Participation in regeneration programmes has been characterised as ‘community participation’, where communities are associated with the deprivation of their local area. The quality of public services in deprived areas has received less attention; this section discusses how deprivation and local problems have been conceptualised.

2.4.2.1 Area Deprivation

Regeneration programmes in Britain have been targeted at areas of high deprivation, identified by multiple indicators of deprivation to reduce the gap between disadvantaged areas and the rest of the country (SEU, 1998). Regeneration programmes have been targeted at specific local areas: New Deal for Communities, for example, has been delivered to ‘neighbourhoods’, though this concept has been used in a relatively flexible way (ODPM, 2005a). These areas have been characterized as ‘deprived’ areas or areas

of 'social exclusion'. The concepts of deprivation and social exclusion represent a widening of the concept of poverty from one based on low-income to one which incorporates associated aspects such as employment, educational attainment, health and voter participation (Burchardt et al., 2002). There are questions about how each aspect might be weighted and what the causal relationship between them is; in any case, the concept of social exclusion is multi-dimensional and dynamic (Room, 1995), as is 'deprivation':

The issues facing deprived neighbourhoods are well known, and make sobering reading. Virtually every social problem – crime, joblessness, poor health, underachievement – is substantially worse in deprived areas. There is growing evidence that these problems reinforce one another to create a downward spiral of deprivation and decline.

(SEU, 2000: 7)

This conceptualization has advantages in that it can highlight aspects of poverty than often co-occur and indicates that policies designed to combat poverty also need to take wider issues into account besides low income. This conceptualization implies a joined-up partnership approach targeted on geographical areas is necessary, where various related policy objectives can be pursued, such as reinvigorating democracy, improving services, promoting joint working between the public, voluntary and community sectors, and building social capital and social cohesion (ODPM, 2005a).

The correlation between area of residence, poverty and social exclusion is not particularly high however. Fewer than 50% of the income-poor live in the 20% most income-deprived super output areas (Berthoud, 2001). Furthermore, concentrations of poverty in certain geographical areas can be alternatively explained by 'residential sorting', the lack of choice that low income households have in selecting where to live and the inability to leave undesirable areas (Lupton and Power, 2002). Social exclusion can further be associated with national factors such as skills issues and low wages (Alcock, 1997; Kleinman, 2000; Lupton, 2003; Perrons and Skyers, 2003) and it could therefore be argued that area-based approaches to social exclusion are a distraction from national, structural issues (Stewart and Taylor, 1995; Jones, 2003) where resources could be more effectively directed (Perrons and Skyers, 2003). The absence of consideration of structural socio-economic factors:

... makes it very much easier to see exclusion as a feature of people in places rather than the wider histories and geographies of a complex polity, culture and economy.

(Cameron, 2006a: 398).

A consequence of this approach is that communities can be characterised as ‘unstable’(Cabinet Office/ODPM, 2005), or ‘pathological’, a key idea underpinning regeneration efforts (Blackman, 1995). The concept of deprived or socially excluded areas can then become tinged with notions of particular groups in society being ‘different’ or ‘other’ because they are excluded and so outside of the mainstream, particularly in terms of being inferior in some way, such as the concept of the ‘underclass’ (Gans, 1995; Levitas, 1998). Thus the community living in areas of high deprivation can be conceptualised as a group which exists outside of ‘normal’ society, which in itself further isolates people. These ‘failing pockets of society’ with a variety of deficits exist outside the norm and therefore require ‘fixes’ to repair the community (Taylor, 2003a).

However, this does not detract from the fact that there are concentrations of socio-economic deprivation in some areas, and people do experience difficulties on a local scale. It could therefore be said that this is a relevant level with which to engage (Jones, 2003), particularly as there remain relationships between factors such as unemployment, high residential turnover, crime and the availability of public and private services (SEU, 2001). The benefits of this approach are that it places action at the level where local people have the most motivation to become involved and services can be responsive to varying local needs. It is also a realistic scale on which to base joined-up services on a human scale. It is this context in which the quality of local public services, particularly with respect to how they address social exclusion, can be addressed and in which local residents may participate and influence services.

2.4.2.2 Services in Deprived Areas

Even though recent regeneration programmes have been designed to reorient local public services, the question of how well public services operate in these areas has received much less attention than the ‘problematic communities’ in those areas. Overall,

disadvantaged groups receive poorer public services (SEU/ODPM, 2005) although this is not entirely related to financial inputs. Analysis of public spending budgets has found that deprived areas receive around 45% greater public spending (including welfare benefit and regeneration spending), with health, children's services and policing services being particularly pro-poor in their spending profiles (Bramley et al., 2005). However, HM Treasury (2000) notes that while deprived areas receive more public funding than other areas, this difference tends to be spent on services such as social security funds rather than preventative funding, and furthermore it does not always reach all disadvantaged groups.

An alternative explanation may be that targeting resources at local authority level does not guarantee the most disadvantaged groups within them will benefit, since intra-area inequality can occur because of how local authorities distribute resources. Howarth et al. (2001) cite an example of one local authority delivering better universal services initially only in wealthier parts of the area, noting that targets and financial pressures mean that local authorities do not have strong incentives to address social exclusion issues. Local authorities have often been motivated by targets to improve averages, meaning that the most disadvantaged can remain behind (SEU/ODPM, 2005). HM Treasury (2000) also notes that council officers and councillors tend to resist targeting resources on the poor. For example, environmental services in the UK tend to be delivered according to need rather than equally across all areas, but deprived areas tend not to receive the levels of service they would need to equalise them in terms of environmental quality. Furthermore, public sector workers tend to view these areas as having problems too difficult to address because of the scale of problems and because residents in these areas tend to complain less (Hastings, 2009). Another study, based on the 2001 census, found that areas with the poorest health had the lowest number of doctors and health professionals per head of population (apart from nurses) and areas with low qualified population had the lowest numbers of teachers per head (Wheeler et al., 2005).

The relationship between residents of deprived areas and public services is also problematic. One study (SEU/ODPM, 2005) found that disadvantaged adults are more likely to use core services (such as GPs) but less likely to use 'discretionary' ones (such as preventative health). They are also more likely to leave services early but because of this may need to re-enter the service later on. Residents of deprived areas tend to have

lower satisfaction levels with their area (Mumford and Power, 2003; Bramley et al., 2005); deprived areas have worse environments (the public service area of particular interest for this study) both in terms of breadth of issues and seriousness of problems, due in part to higher population density and more litter being dropped (Hastings et al., 2005). In relation to specific environmental services, rates of satisfaction with recycling, refuse collection and parks, street cleaning, road maintenance are lower in deprived areas (Duffy, 2000). This may be because higher spending does not meet the higher levels of need in these areas, as noted above.

Services are therefore a critical issue for residents living in deprived areas, with local participation creating opportunities to improve their access to public resources:

Ultimately, the success of community forums and other consultative mechanisms needs to be judged against whether such forums enable communities in a deprived area to gain greater control over the quality of their lives. This comes down to a greater capacity to draw more resources into their area and to shape services and developments to meet local residents' needs more effectively.

(Khamis, 2000: 266)

While some local areas experience multiple problems and may be stigmatised through notions of deprivation, local services are also an important issue in these areas but have tended to be overlooked. Participatory policies present opportunities for residents to influence these services; this has been framed in terms of the community, discussed in the following section.

2.4.3 'Good Communities' and Active Citizens

Community has been constructed as a geographical entity, as a site of concentrated social exclusion and deficits, yet the 'community' has also been prescribed as the solution to local problems where groups of local residents come together and participate in regeneration. Community has been characterised in terms of homogeneity and virtue, while participating residents have also been constructed as active and responsible citizens.

2.4.3.1 *The ‘Good Community’*

New Labour’s use of the notion of community as a solution is most clearly encapsulated in communitarian theory, a reaction to the individualisation of market economies (Frazer, 1995) which resounds with New Labour’s Third Way philosophy:

Communitarianism is presented as an answer to the problems created by the failures of the old (statist) left and the new (marketising) right, promising the prospect of a ‘third way’. In relation to the state, communitarians appear to have accepted the burden of the New Right critique that the state is both over-powerful and inappropriately interventionist... Community is presented as the neglected force which could fill the gap left by consumerist individualism, revitalising a civil society which can be reduced to neither the nation state nor the marketplace.
(Clarke and Newman, 1997: 131)

Communitarian philosophy promotes the concept of the ‘local community’, together with notions of social capital and cohesion. This is an idealised form of community which entails the idea of relationships between people with shared values, social bonds, consensus, homogeneity, engagement, volunteerism, neighbourliness and so on, while overlooking other identities and inter-community conflict (Frazer, 1995). It emphasises the community as a normative, essential unit of society (Etzioni, 1993) within which a balance of rights and responsibilities is held (Heron, 2001). Communitarian ideas are also based on strong sense of a ‘lost’ history of community (Frazer, 1995; Cameron, 2006a) where communities are places where people know each other and behave in socially beneficial ways, are active and have a common identity (Clarke and Newman, 1997) and which needs to be rediscovered.

This is problematic, however, as the identification of a ‘community’ can be difficult, especially in urban areas, and communities are rarely homogenous groups (Cars et al., 2004; Wallace, 2005). Frazer (1995) argues that other identities, besides our membership of a ‘local community’, are likely to have precedence for most people. The identification between community and locality is particularly contested with the emergence of international technologically-linked communities and interest-based groups (Clark, 2007). Clark argues, however, that although community is increasingly seen as a choice-driven, non-local phenomenon facilitated by modern communications,

some relationships remain local. Furthermore, some local communities may be maintained by the 'traditional' attributes of community such as mutuality which may have benefits for the disadvantaged (Forrest, 2004). Nevertheless, the 'community' that participates in regeneration may be made up of different types of sub-groups of individuals rather than a homogenous group.

Despite characterising deprived areas as pathological at times, community and civiness in these areas has been prescribed as the answer to a 'lost community', thus being both the source of problems and the answer to them (Freemau, 2005). The beneficial aspects of community are held to produce an answer to social problems such as crime and poverty through government support and provision of opportunities for participation (Mathers et al., 2008). For example, communities can be constructed as moral environments in which members volunteer for the benefit of the community and also censure the rogue elements within them causing anti-social behaviour (Wallace, 2005). Local communities are charged with creating their own problems, as being responsible for their poverty (Taylor, 2003a) and bearing responsibility for resolving them (Taylor, 2005) such as through developing capacity, networking and so on (Kearns, 2004).

Furthermore, the term 'community' tends to gloss over any difficult social relationships (Gilchrist, 2003). There may well be different groups within the area who have different agendas and priorities (Atkinson and Cope, 1997); communities may embody conflicts, between established residents and 'undesirable' newcomers such as asylum seekers for example (Wallace, 2005) or, typically, between older people and teenagers (Brent, 1997; Forrest and Kearns, 1999).

2.4.3.2 *Responsibilized Citizens*

Resident participation has also been characterised as the involvement of 'active' citizens who take responsibility for problems in their own areas. This reflects New Labour's aspiration for a closer relationship between citizens and government (Civil Renewal Unit, 2005) and a reconfiguration of citizen rights and responsibilities where, as well as having rights to welfare provision, a citizen also has responsibilities to contribute to society:

The Government is helping more and more citizens to exercise their rights, but also making it clear that they must fulfil their responsibilities...

(SEU/ODPM, 2005: 10)

This leads to the reframing of what a ‘good citizen’ in a ‘good community’ should be:

We must aim to build strong, empowered and active communities, in which people increasingly do things for themselves and the state acts to facilitate, support and enable citizens to lead self-determined, fulfilled lives.

(Blunkett, 2003: 43)

These active citizens can also exercise ‘choice’ in services and are responsibilized in their personal and social behaviours to promote their own and social good (Clarke, 2005). ‘Active citizens’ can be encouraged through increasing their personal capacities and skills to participate in decision making (Taylor, 2003b). The ‘active, empowered citizen’ also takes on responsibilities for local services:

If public services are not being delivered satisfactorily, people need to know why and to be able to do something about it.

(ODPM, 2005a: 15)

One day when I am asked by someone whose neighbourhood is plagued with anti-social behaviour; or whose local school is failing or hospital is poor, “what are you going to do about it?”, I want to be able to reply: “We have given you the resources. We have given you the powers. Now tell me what you are going to do about it.

(Blair, 2005)

The hybridisation and overlapping of New Labour policies, such as the idea of the active citizen in the community, is an example of the Third Way approach which combines the values of the welfare state and social democracy with neo-liberalism. The issue of what happens when ‘active citizens’ have ideas or aims for their area which conflict with each other or with government aims is not addressed.

2.4.4 Community Development and the New Public Management

New Labour has adopted the relatively political language of community development in participatory policies which emphasises the empowerment of residents. However, participatory policies have been implemented within a managerialist framework, adopting community development ideas in a relatively technocratic, prescribed way (Dinham, 2005). There are significant tensions between these two approaches.

2.4.4.1 The Community Development Model

The participation of groups or communities is a central concept within the field of community development. It can be defined as “...*the capacity of local populations to respond collectively to events and issues that affect them.*” (Gilchrist, 2003: 16). This may be response within or outside of formal governance structures; new social movements, for example, exist outside of formal state structures and seek to challenge not only existing practices but the knowledge and discourses on which they are based (Barnes et al., 2007). By contrast, within regeneration programmes residents participate within a structured programme.

Community development also promotes capacity building within communities to assist their participation (Dinham, 2005). This is linked to the idea of promoting the agency of the poor, either on an individual or group basis, which enables people to confront the powerful (Beresford and Hoban, 2005). Exerting influence may take time since communities may have existed in difficult circumstances for considerable periods of time and be unable, initially, to envision what changes they wish to effect (Wallace, 2005).

Community development practice encompasses the concept of ‘empowerment’, and although it lacks an agreed definition (Parsloe, 1996) it embodies notions of influence or power over external bodies:

Empowerment is commonly understood as the condition of having power, and being able to exercise it and obtain the benefits thereof.

(Uphoff, 2005: 219)

...to have any real value or meaning, community empowerment must involve some attempt to increase the influence of the community over the external policy developments that affect it.

(Bridgen, 2004: 292)

This concept of empowerment lends itself to instrumental participation in regeneration since it addresses resident influence over public services. Empowerment is an important aspect of participation, particularly in the context of social exclusion policy since a lack of power can be seen as a core feature of poverty (Lister, 2004; Beresford and Hoban, 2005). Empowerment is therefore a relatively political concept:

There remains a strong sense in the literature on participatory development that the proper objective of participation is to ensure the 'transformation' of existing development practice and, more radically, the social relations, institutional practices and capacity gaps which cause social exclusion.

(Hickey and Mohan, 2004: 13)

Community development incorporates a range of different, 'fused discourses' such as: charity and patronage; political activism; the welfare state (including ideas of rights and responsibilities); and the market and self-sufficiency (Kenny, 2002). Empowerment can be seen as a right-wing, neo-liberal agenda and as part of a drive to roll back the state, such as through promoting the role of the private and voluntary sector in regeneration (Mayo and Anastacio, 1999). However, Mayo (1999) notes how left wing approaches can also be seen in terms of 'promoting quality services', empowering people and promoting solidarity and 'collectivity'. 'Empowerment' therefore does not readily fall into any specific party-political perspective.

The term 'empowerment' has been increasingly adopted from the community development field to mainstream British policy in recent years (Tunstall, 2001), for example:

The empowerment of all people and communities, including minority groups, to improve their quality of life is crucial to the achievement of a wide range of

Government objectives and to the commitment of local government to devolve power to local people, communities and other organisations.

(ODPM, 2005a: 9)

We intend to put more power in the hands of local people and communities, supported by local, regional and national government, to shape their neighbourhoods and the services they rely on – including housing, schools, health, policing and community safety.

(ODPM, 2005b: 18)

While community development uses the language of empowerment and may describe residents taking an antagonistic towards power structures and institutions of the state, it can have limitations in how it is adopted in regeneration because it operates within state structures. Furthermore, it could be used to legitimise the retraction of public services, advocated by both the left and the right (Mayo and Anastacio, 1999), which could raise concerns over whether it is ultimately in the interests of residents. However, within regeneration programmes a main limitation has been its adoption within a new public management framework, discussed below.

2.4.4.2 The New Public Management

New Labour continued a pre-1997 process of reforming public services by introducing new ways of working based on private sector practices, sometimes referred to as the new public management. Public services were compared unfavourably to the rise of consumerism and choice in society at large, with claims that there had been changes in the expectations of the public which occurred because of improved standards of customer service in the commercial sector and the potential for new technology to improve services (ODPM, 2005a). Public services were subject to a ‘modernisation’ agenda (Newman, 2001), originating in the previous conservative administration’s promotion of neo-liberal ideas about markets, the individual, choice and self-interest (Hoggett et al., 2009). Services users were redefined as ‘customers’ with an implied shift in the relationship between citizen and public service from trust to contract (Clarke and Newman, 1997). Managerialist practices were introduced into service delivery as a way to reduce the self-interest of professionals and improve the efficiency of services

(Hoggett et al., 2009). Local authorities adopted some methods from the private sector, such as the wide use of satisfaction surveys (Birch, 2002; ODPM, 2006a). Inspection and audit also expanded significantly in the early years of New Labour (Corry and Stoker, 2002). However, this shift has been partial: new managerial approaches emphasising innovation, efficiency and autonomy of managers taken from models in the private sector have tended to co-exist with older bureaucratic ways of working, rather than replacing them (Clarke and Newman, 1997).

Within regeneration programmes, participation policy has reflected this shift through its adoption as a management practice, where regeneration officers ‘deliver empowerment’ through initiatives. This view constructs participation initiatives as management tools, as “*new mechanisms to empower residents*” (SEU, 2001: 31). This approach carries implications that empowerment can be delivered to communities by professionals (Duncan and Thomas, 2000), thus paradoxically reinforcing an unequal power relationship (Long, 2001; Jones, 2003). This conceptualises power as being given or provided by the more powerful to the less powerful which can lead to a contradictory idea of empowerment if, like Kagan (2006), one makes a distinction between top-down imposed participation and bottom-up participation; it could be argued that empowerment has to be based on bottom-up action (Parsloe, 1996; White, 1996; Lister, 2004).

Participation has also been one of various aspects of regeneration programmes subject to targets: programmes have been required to include residents in decision making and to report on this. Engagement and participation have been incorporated into performance management regimes for public services and local authorities, for example the Audit Commission’s (Audit Commission, 2005a) Comprehensive Performance Assessment guidelines state that:

...we want to see that councils engage effectively with their service users and wider communities. We also want to see that such engagement makes a difference in practice.

(Audit Commission, 2005a: 9)

There is a broad political drive behind promoting instrumental participation; however there is also a danger that it may be applied in a narrow, technocratic way by public

services which may adopt a managerial framework (Burton, 2009), focusing on participation providing information to improve decision making quality, as in this example:

[Participation] is also part of good management and high-quality service provision. Consulting and involving service users, and finding out what the general public want from their local services, should not be seen as an extra chore for service providers, but as a means of carrying out their work more efficiently and effectively – it may even make life easier for them.

(Audit Commission, 2003: 3)

One potential drawback of instrumental approaches to participation is that it can be seen as a marketized, managerialist approach (Taylor, 2003b) since it may draw residents in on the rationale of supplying information to make better management decisions for example. Technocratic approaches implement participation through “*a measurement and audit culture*” (Taylor, 2003a: 218), detracting from the more central political aspects (Hickey and Mohan, 2004). New Labour has used the language of community development without fully implementing the approach (Dinham, 2005), in a similar way to buzzwords such as ‘participation’ and ‘empowerment’ have been used to fit in with more neo-liberal agendas in the international development field, where “*dissident meanings are stripped away*” (Cornwall and Brock, 2005: 1057). Taylor (2005) argues, however, that although there are contradictions in central government promoting policies such as devolution, it nevertheless has a role in providing spaces for local residents in local governance that local authorities might otherwise occupy.

2.4.5 Summary

This section has discussed underpinning concepts and discourses of resident participation within regeneration programmes: the concept of participation, notions of area deprivation, the community, the active citizen, community development and new public management practices. The notion of ‘instrumental participation’ has been outlined to indicate the impact on public services as being a critical component of this type of participation, rather than any normative aspects or changes to residents themselves which are also rationales present in participation and regeneration policies.

This section has also discussed how residents have been conceptualised as ‘the community’ in normative terms where members of the community act in socially beneficial ways to resolve their own problems, in contrast to notions of ‘pathological communities’ in deprived areas. Problems in local services, while they have recognised as an area for regeneration programmes to address, have received less attention, and the full implications of community development and empowerment approaches have not been realised.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has identified the policy areas of interest for this study, discussing relevant aspects of participation policies and regeneration programmes within the context of social exclusion. Participation has been implemented based on certain conceptualisations of social exclusion and geography, the nature of community, managerialism in public services and notions of the active citizen, which limit possibilities for residents.

This chapter has also drawn attention to the significance of public service quality to residents, and the desire for participation that results in real influence; these two issues have received little recognition although analysis of how participatory policies and regeneration programmes have been designed indicate that resident influence may be limited. However, participatory policies do provide some opportunity for residents to influence services; the following chapter engages with the notion of ‘governance’ to explore this further.

3 Regeneration Programmes as Governance Networks

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explored the concept of participation, how it has been implemented in regeneration policies in Britain, and how these policies have employed concepts such as community and the responsible citizen in ways that have characterised participatory opportunities for residents. This chapter situates participation in regeneration partnerships within governance perspectives. Governance perspectives cover a relatively broad range of concerns and approaches; those which address the dynamics of governing will be of particular interest here since the objective of the study is to explain the process and outcomes of resident participation in governing.

Governance perspectives are used to explore the changing institutional arrangements of regeneration programmes in local governance, and ways in which residents and other actors participate in decision making within a context of opportunities and constraints. As such, this perspective is adopted in order to address structural aspects of governing and how actors operate within them. Governance perspectives, however, tend to be somewhat descriptive and do not explain processes of governing at the micro level in much detail, tending to make rather general assumptions about trust and interdependence between actors for example. This thesis, therefore, draws on the concept of ‘governance networks’ since it articulates governing more expressly in terms of the relationships between different actors in governing and uncovers the dynamics of how governance networks operate through these relationships to produce change. To this end the thesis also draws on social network theory and its concepts of network ‘nodes’ and ‘ties’ in order to expand the notions of ‘networks’ in governing more explicitly.

This chapter first discusses governance network perspectives, outlining the main theoretical points of interest and the relevance of this theoretical perspective to regeneration programmes. There follows a discussion of how this perspective contributes to an understanding of the dynamics of governing with respect to regeneration programmes, through employing institutionalist perspectives which draw

attention to how actors behave within the institutional constraints of governance networks. Lastly, this chapter elaborates in more detail on network aspects of governing using social network theory to examine network dynamics.

3.2 Governance Network Perspectives

‘Governance’ refers both to changing modes of governing in an empirical sense and also a related theoretical perspective in response to these changes (Pierre, 2000). It emerged in the 1980s as a term which referred to the involvement of non-state actors in governing when private and voluntary sector organisations became more involved in public services (Kjaer, 2004). This section discusses the empirical and theoretical aspects of governance in relation to regeneration programmes and the opening up of opportunities for resident participation, discussing the strengths and limitations of this perspective.

3.2.1 Empirical Context

The design and delivery of public policy has increasingly involved non-state actors as well as government (Kjaer, 2004), sometimes characterised as the ‘new governance’ (Rhodes, 1996). This shift can be traced to the 1980s and the engagement of multiple actors (the private sector in particular) in governing rather than just the state (Davies, 2005). Non-state actors have been involved in policy making historically (Marinetto, 2003), in policy networks for example. Governance networks have a history as various kinds of co-governing arrangements, in policy task forces for example, couched in different administrative conditions in different countries (Sorensen and Torfing, 2009). Governance may be organised in different ways, sometimes through formal contracts or joint projects and sometimes by developing shared values in a more ‘bottom-up’ way (Stoker, 1998).

Changing forms of governance in Britain have been visible at the national and local government level, and public policy has increasingly been delivered through networks of organisations (Bridgen, 2004), including regeneration partnerships which are relatively structured arrangements. Non-state actors have been more involved in the

delivery of policy while central government has maintained control over financial resources and regulation, and has coordinated cross-cutting policy through central units such as the Cabinet Office and Social Exclusion Unit (Marinetto, 2003). As mentioned in the previous chapter, the role of local government has been partially reconfigured through an increased emphasis on steering rather than delivering local services: for example, the Local Government Act 2000 characterised the role of local authorities as ‘community leaders’ who would coordinate local agencies and also involve the local community. Alongside this, regeneration partnerships have opened up opportunities for local voluntary organisations, community groups and residents to participate in decision making processes at the local level.

3.2.2 Theoretical Context

The term ‘governance’ has emerged in response to the changing policy context described above, but as a broad term with various meanings and reflecting the complexity of governing arrangements (Rhodes, 2000; Bevir and Rhodes, 2003a). Governance, like ‘government’, is concerned with governing and its results, but is distinct in terms of process:

Governance is ultimately concerned with creating the conditions for ordered rule and collective action. The outputs of governance are not therefore different from those of government. It is rather a matter of a difference in processes.
(Stoker, 1998: 17)

Governance refers to processes of governing which have changed; two central aspects of this perspective which are particularly relevant to resident participation in regeneration partnerships are discussed here, the changing roles and relationship between the state and non-state actors, and network aspects of governing.

3.2.2.1 State and Non-State Actors

Governance perspectives examine changing modes of governing, in part the changing role of the state which is no longer the sole supplier and governor of services or creator of policy: the state no longer rules or provides services directly but is one actor in a

governing process. This extends to the local level where local authorities have also increasingly been defined as coordinating, rather than providing services (Corry and Stoker, 2002; Kooiman, 2003).

Because government adopts a steering role, rather than controlling policy processes, it is more dependent on the cooperation of non-state actors (Klijn and Koppenjan, 2000). The relationship between the state and non-state actors is changed, conceptualised as organisations or individuals working together through voluntary agreement, usually on a non-contractual basis. For example, trust operates, instead of sanctions (in hierarchies) or the 'checks and balances' (of markets) (Boviard, 2005). Non-state actors are more active and take on more responsibility for governing, embodying the 'active citizen' described in the previous chapter.

Changing modes of governing reflect the Third Way philosophy of New Labour and its reconceptualisation of society and the state:

In a solid society, with its dense networks of respect and cooperation, people are likely to value altruism as much as self-interest. This is why the third way seeks to strengthen civil society through its policies of devolution. In many cases, this means cashing out entitlements so that people can work together in defining their mutual interests and rebuilding the habits of trust. This does not mean smaller government, just government of a different kind. It reflects a revised role for the state – as a facilitator, as an enabler: still involved in the funding and regulation of services but not necessarily in their provision.

(Latham, 2001: 27)

There are various rationales for new modes of governing, such as greater efficiency, legitimacy, accountability and democracy (Kjaer, 2004). At the local level, governance in neighbourhoods is implemented for various overlapping political, social and public management purposes and rationales (Lowndes and Sullivan, 2007). The efficiency and effectiveness argument has been made that while the state has expanded welfare services since WW2 it lacks capacity to deliver, and so recruits other actors (Kjaer, 2004). Governments are not, by themselves, able to address complex social problems alone; governing then becomes the responsibility of other societal actors as well as government (Kooiman, 2003). There may, however, be a trade-off between including

residents in decision making and the efficiency of decision making processes. Conversely, participation may actually improve the quality of decisions; these two aspects of governing are therefore not necessarily contradictory (Borzel and Panke, 2007). In any case, a definition of effectiveness is unlikely to be agreed on in governance networks particularly if there is conflict (Sorensen and Torfing, 2009). From a resident's perspective, inclusion in governing provides opportunities for influence, though this entails becoming more active in governance structures.

The inclusion of new actors in governing processes has had implications for the role of the state, in terms of its reduced monopoly on governing, which could be described as the 'hollowing out' of the state (Rhodes, 2006). However, while governing may occur at a greater distance from the state, there remains a relationship with the state which governance networks must manage (Jones and Evans, 2006), where there:

... is not a hollowing out of the state, rather it is a new modality of state power, agency and social action and indeed a new form of state.

(Ball, 2008: 748)

The state has adapted rather than lost power (Newman, 2001), taking on a new role with respect to governing rather than withdrawing from governing. In regeneration programmes this is visible through performance management regimes and programme funding structures, which steer activities at the local level.

3.2.2.2 Governance Networks

'Networks' can usefully be regarded as a key aspect of governance (Rhodes, 1997): the notion of a network captures the idea of various actors, state and non-state, working together in the process of governing. Ideas about the involvement of networks in governing emerged from concept of policy networks in the 1970s which analysed inter-organisational dynamics (Klijn and Koppenjan, 2000). Torfing and Sorensen define governance as:

1. a relatively stable horizontal articulation of interdependent, but operationally autonomous actors; 2. who interact through negotiations; 3. which take place

within a regulative, normative, cognitive and imaginary framework; 4. that is self-regulating within limits set by external agencies; and 5. which contributes to the production of public purpose.

(Sorensen and Torfing, 2007: 9)

The term ‘governance network’ denotes a distinct arrangement of actors involved in governing which nominally has a flat rather than a hierarchical structure, coupled with (at least a measure of) autonomous self-governing; it is not necessarily the case that all actors are equal but there is no formalised hierarchy. This is referred to as ‘heterarchy’ by Jessop (1998). Actors also engage in distinct governing processes within the context of rules. These characteristics represent an ideal rather than reality in entities that are referred to as governance networks.

Network forms of governance can be contrasted to bureaucratic, hierarchical modes of governing, which use command and control mechanisms, and also to markets, which operate through regulated competition. However, the state’s role, as ‘steering’ remains and the shift from ‘hierarchies’ to ‘networks’ is not complete. Changes in governance have created a field of tensions between different types of governing rather than a complete shift to network forms of governing, creating instability (Newman, 2001). Furthermore, local partnerships are often a mix of market, hierarchy and network, and may suffer problems relating to the relevant dysfunctions depending on which is operating (Entwistle et al., 2007).

This changed relationship between state and non-state actors raises issues about the role of the state in governing arrangements which may be unclear, fluid or difficult to manage. Governing in networks requires diplomacy rather than command (Rhodes, 2007) and is therefore challenging, requiring those in politics and the public sector to acquire new skills in managing and metagoverning networks (Sorensen and Torfing, 2009). At the same time, networks have to be managed so that they also include actors in governing: Sorensen and Torfing (2005) argue, for example, that politicians should ensure governance networks are designed with a democratic design so that that they are open and accessible.

Governance network perspectives also draw attention to the different kinds of processes that this form of governing entails. According to some governance network perspectives,

actors work together and are dependent on each other to reach a particular goal, through cooperative actions such as exchanging resources or information. This is seen as a more effective way to analyse and address some difficult problems (Sorensen and Torfing, 2007), to coordinate services and so respond better to complex issues (Whitehead, 2007). Interdependence in governance networks arises from actors needing others to achieve their goals (Kickert et al., 1997). Interaction in networks can be contrasted to markets where actors work in competition with each other to pursue their own goals and also to the hierarchical command and control structures of bureaucracies of government. This will depend on various factors such as how closely aligned actor aims are and how much pressure for consensus exists. Consensus tends to be a feature in closed networks with common values and aims, whereas open networks are more likely to have actors with different aims and therefore conflict (Davies, 2005; Koppenjan, 2007). Too much consensus may result in some voices or opinions being excluded or not expressed, whereas too much conflict may prevent a network from functioning effectively (Koppenjan, 2007).

3.2.2.3 Governance and Power

Governance networks both enable and constrain actors (Kooiman, 2003) by creating structures for participation while setting parameters through state steering. The reconfiguration of the respective roles of the state and non-state actors implies changing power relationships between the two, even while the state retains a relatively central ‘steering’ role. The inclusion of residents in governing processes implies some contribution to shaping policy, and therefore empowerment.

Here, since the interest is in how resident participation might impact public services, power will be explored in these terms: do resident aspirations result in any changes in public services? There are, of course, various wider aspects of power to this, for example how the formation of resident aspirations may be unduly influenced (Lukes, 2005), how various cultural factors or prevailing discourses might create constraints, or how self-governing residents might be constructed as an exercise of power, as in governmentality approaches (e.g. MacLeavy, 2009). While these are valid concerns, the thesis will only address power with respect to resident influence on public services.

Power inequalities in governance networks derive from the position an actor has in the network or through the resources they have compared to other actors. Perrons and Skyers (2003) implicitly define empowerment by citing the fact that decision making is often in the hands of local authorities or higher structures rather than residents. Resources are not distributed equally across networks and this also has implications for power (Klijn and Koppenjan, 2000), the most obvious example being that national and local government control funding while residents have little access to significant financial resources. However, residents are not necessarily powerless in governance networks. Power can be conceptualised as being dispersed in networks, because the state does not hold onto a controlling role, and power becomes a function of the relationship and interactions of the actors in the network:

Governance theory offers an account of the dispersal of power beyond and within the state, undermining the privileged place of representative democracy as the means of channelling citizen interests and legitimising governmental actions. The image of a hierarchical relationship between state and citizen – with the state above and beyond the reach of the citizenry – is displaced by the idea of multiple parallel spaces in which power is encountered and negotiated.

(Newman, 2005: 4)

The exercise of power within governance networks is multi-faceted and is shaped by the roles and resources of different actors. For example, while residents lack control over funding they have symbolic status as recognised actors within regeneration partnerships, and have power to confer legitimacy and approval on public agencies which are partly judged by satisfaction surveys. The challenge for exploring instrumental participation is to determine whether and how residents achieve their aspirations in this complex setting. Power in governing remains an under-researched area however (Boviard, 2005).

3.2.2.4 Governance and Regeneration Partnerships

A governance perspective encompasses the notion of non-state actors in governing. This broadly elucidates resident participation in regeneration, providing a socio-political context while leaving room for a discussion of the agency of actors and thus providing a link between macro and micro level analyses (Bevir and Richards, 2009a). Regeneration

partnerships are pluralist governing structures which involve local residents, the voluntary sector, private sector, local and national government in decision making for local areas. They operate with some independence from the state and as such represent part of a wider change in governing in Britain. Because regeneration programmes are heavily steered by the state, one could argue that they are not governance networks since power relationships are uneven (Davies, 2000), though one could also argue they are governance networks but not necessarily 'pure' forms of networks since they also display hierarchy (Lowndes and Skelcher, 1998).

3.2.2.5 Explanatory Power

The term 'governance perspectives' rather than 'governance theory' is used here as 'governance' has tended to be used either in a descriptive or normative sense rather than being developed as a theory with explanatory power. Governance perspectives have been characterised as first and second generation, the first generation being more concerned with describing the changes in modes of governing in society at different levels, and the second taking a more analytical approach (Sorensen and Torfing, 2007). It is the more analytical stance which is relevant to an attempt to understand the dynamics of participation, in order to explain resident participation and its outcomes in governance networks.

Governance perspectives tend to be fairly comprehensive in their empirical and theoretical scope, encompassing a range of governing technologies, levels of governing and types of engagement and describing a variety of governing arrangements and processes (Bevir and Rhodes, 2003b; Bevir and Richards, 2009b). It is however somewhat restricted in its ability to explain change, borrowing from other theoretical approaches in order to explain processes, drawing on political and sociological perspectives, studies of decision making, institutions, culture, organisations for example (Sorensen and Torfing, 2007). This is especially true at the micro level, as governance studies have rarely been applied at this level and tend to rely on institutional theory when they do. Furthermore, governance perspectives have been primarily concerned with change from government to governance (Newman, 2001) rather than the external impact that governing brings about: governance perspectives do not necessarily explain change well (Rhodes, 2007).

Governance perspectives nevertheless have two redeeming features which are useful in researching participation and its outcomes. Firstly, governance provides a coherence since its broad scope takes in the complexity of the empirical cases of governing and various theoretical perspectives, thus providing an overall framework of participation within a socio-political context. This breadth of concerns is one of its strengths as it enables the analysis of the complexity of governing, taking in concepts such as metagovernance, institutions and structures of governing, legitimacy and effectiveness, issues of power and drawing on a variety of sociological, political or managerial standpoints. These theories on their own provide rather thin or incomplete accounts of participation which are divorced from a socio-political context. Governance perspectives, because of their comprehensiveness, address the dynamics of actor engagement, institutions and complexity, and socio-political contexts. Thus, while Jessop (1998) identifies governance as a 'buzzword' which can lack definition, a governance perspective nevertheless has value as an 'organizing framework' (Stoker, 1998).

For the purposes of this study, the theoretical perspectives adopted within governance frameworks can be divided into two types: those which analyse structural constraints such as metagovernance and sociological institutionalism, and those which analyse actor behaviour, such as embedded rational actor perspectives. Using a single perspective either only analyses the institutions or arrangements of governing, or else analyses actors removed from their context; using these perspectives together enables an analysis of actor behaviour within the context of a governing environment. These two aspects are addressed in the following two sections through, firstly, a discussion of metagoverning and institutional dynamics and, following this, actor-oriented network perspectives.

Secondly, governance perspectives tend to implicitly or explicitly employ the concept of network which this thesis argues is useful for analysing the dynamics of participation in governing in terms of how residents may influence services, through brokers and network ties. This provides more detail about network dynamics and processes, as well as describing governing outcomes and change, which other perspectives do not. The final section in this chapter will explore this point in more depth and argue that the dynamics of participation in governing can be understood in terms of network concepts, particularly in accounts of participation outcomes through regeneration.

3.2.3 Summary

Governance network perspectives have arisen in response to a changing policy landscape where non-state actors have become more involved in governing, although the extent to which power has been diffused from the state to wider society is debatable because the state has retained a powerful position through its steering role. Governance perspectives tend to be broad and have at times lacked a focus on analytical rigour in place of normative claims, but nevertheless have potential to shed light on resident participation in regeneration programmes. Governance perspectives provide an organising framework for examining resident participation in regeneration. Network aspects of governance perspectives are particularly useful because they articulate the relationship between the state and non-state actors more specifically.

3.3 Governance Dynamics

Two theoretical aspects of governance perspectives are discussed in this section which contribute to an understanding of the dynamics of resident participation in regeneration. The first is metagovernance which is defined as the broad governing of governance networks. Metagoverning creates the structures of governing arrangements and therefore the opportunities and constraints for residents participating in local decision making through regeneration programmes. This is particularly significant for regeneration programmes which are central government initiatives and provide a very structured environment for resident participation. Secondly, the internal dynamics of governance networks are explored in terms of how actors engage and whether cultural factors (such as rules of behaviour) or rational action (such as strategy) may explain processes. Evidence from the regeneration and participation as well as governance literatures is used, much of which draws on institutionalist perspectives. This section concludes that while these inform about the dynamics of participation processes in a governing context, they tend to highlight constraints for resident participation and are therefore limited in explaining how residents might influence public services.

3.3.1 Metagovernance

The concept of ‘metagovernance’ refers to the oversight, management or control of networks, and how the formal rules and parameters of the network are established. The level at which metagoverning is carried out varies: it may apply to very broad principles or refer to local level management (Sorensen and Torfing, 2009). For this study, the related term ‘network management’ is used to refer to more local level management of local governance networks such as regeneration programmes, by local authorities for example, while ‘metagoverning’ will be used to refer to the management of governing at the state level.

Governance perspectives emphasise the interdependence and engagement of actors in a rule-bound process which is part internally devised but is also directed, or metagoverned, by the state. The state’s role, as noted earlier, is not completely diminished but remains, albeit in an altered form. The state can no longer command as in hierarchical arrangements (Kjaer, 2004) but maintains a role in overseeing or metagoverning, setting parameters for governing while other actors play a role in decision making within this framework. Networks can be conceptualised as needing managing or metagoverning, for example to ensure the network understands and achieves its goals, to reduce conflict (Sorensen and Torfing, 2009), prevent some groups from becoming too powerful (Kjaer, 2004) or for avoiding inefficiency (Kickert et al., 1997), in short to avoid governance failure. Government is required to manage networks to ensure compliance with overall aims of a network, while managing conflict (Davies, 2005).

The role of metagovernance in regeneration programmes has been significant since they are created and heavily steered by central government. New Deal for Communities, while it has embodied the principles of participation emphatically in its policy design, has also demonstrated typical traits of partnerships. Local resident participation has been limited from the outset of programmes by formal, ‘top-down’ implementation (Perrons and Skyers, 2003; Barnes et al., 2003b; Dinham, 2005; Purdue, 2005) where parameters have already been set (Gaventa, 2004b) with little room for resident input into the design of programmes (Foley and Martin, 2000). For example, programmes such as NDC and HAZ were initially set up as long term programmes but short term achievements became more important to politicians, and in the case of NDC political

attention changed towards employment over other objectives (Barnes et al., 2003a; Lawless et al., 2010).

The most significant aspect in regeneration partnerships perhaps has been the tension between central government's requirement to meet performance management targets, and the competing requirement for partnerships to be based on local resident concerns. Programmes may be structured to ensure the inclusion of different groups of actors, but a programme may nevertheless be dictated in its aims by a funding source with attached monitoring rules (Bristow et al., 2008). Performance targets and audit regimes from central government retain state power (Newman et al., 2004), through for example the definition and design at national level of floor targets (Atkinson and Cope, 1997). At the local level, national performance frameworks may be experienced as unequal power relations between the local actors and either local or national government (Purdue, 2005). For example, NDC partnerships have had to meet performance targets through a self-assessment exercise measuring their progress against nationally-set targets. Government has also designed how residents are to be involved in NDC (Wright et al., 2006) but while community participation has been promoted by government in principle (ODPM, 2005b) it tends not to be represented substantially in performance targets or programme objectives (Chanan, 2003) which now drive regeneration programmes, and residents' views consequently tend to be a lower priority (Atkinson and Cope, 1997; Dinham, 2005). The consequence has been an emphasis on centrally driven targets rather than 'bottom-up' decision making (Gilchrist, 2003).

Metagoverning also affects the context of regeneration programmes at the local level: public services with which regeneration programmes engage face resource limitations and short timescales (Ray et al., 2008) and local authorities face constraints in terms of national targets, funding and willingness to take risks (Burgess et al., 2001). Public agencies are also required to involve local residents or service users but bureaucracy creates limits to how responsive statutory agencies can be (Atkinson and Cope, 1997) since they are also subject to monitoring and performance regimes.

Network management may also constrain resident participation. For example, local authority modes of operating can be adopted as a default (Barnes et al., 2007). Barnes et al. (2007) found that participation of local people was inhibited by the continuing control of local officials over how forums were run. ODPM (2003) in guidance to local

authorities on preparing LSP community strategies, stated that they should include community views when drawing them up but that it was up to the local authority to arbitrate and make the final decision and that services themselves, although involved in community strategy and LSPs, make final decisions about their own services themselves. Urban regeneration programmes are often run by staff working for local government (Whitehead, 2007) which preserves local authority control through staffing and bureaucratic ways of operating (Holman, 2002). Local authorities are powerful in local partnerships, as they tend to control aspects such as finance and recruitment, leaving local residents more of a 'rubber-stamping' role (Burns et al. (2004) and restricting their role to implementation rather than strategy (Whitehead, 2007). This is also demonstrated through local authorities' role as 'accountable bodies' which retain financial and legal control over programmes such as NDC:

The very notion of an accountable body – which absorbs the risks and liabilities of self-organised partnership networks – indicates how pre-existing political systems and hierarchies are being used to coordinate and govern partnerships.

(Whitehead, 2007: 17)

Participation in partnerships has therefore been constrained by structures which create constraints for resident participation, limiting the extent to which they can influence public services. While there has been an increased emphasis on involving residents in decision making rather than merely consulting them (Gilchrist, 2003), some studies have concluded that programme design and financial control remains in the hands of national and local government (Lupton, 2003) and therefore disadvantaged groups do not always have the influence over local regeneration agendas that they are purported to (Stewart and Taylor, 1995; Taylor, 2003a), especially at the strategic rather than the local delivery level.

One response to concern over the real extent of resident influence has been a growing emphasis on accountability for programmes to local residents, to ensure that their voices are responded to (ODPM, 2005a) and for agencies to communicate outcomes to residents (Audit Commission, 2003). Accountability has been described as responding to local voices, an important element of participation (Beresford, 1999; Gaventa, 2004b). Accountability for participation is currently weak in regeneration programmes however:

even when local area regeneration programmes are accountable for implementing participation activities it is rare for them to be required to report on the quality of involvement (Richardson, 2005). Participation may therefore be carried out by agencies only at a superficial level (Wilkinson and Appelbee, 1999).

Therefore, although regeneration programmes, structured as governance networks, may involve the extension of power to non-state actors, the state retains the job of metagovernance (Taylor, 2005). This is therefore an example of overlapping forms of governance rather than a wholesale shift from ‘old hierarchies’ to ‘new networks’ (Newman et al., 2004). In practice, this creates limited space within regeneration programmes for resident influence at best, and at worst may give the appearance of network governing while concealing more hierarchical structures (Whitehead, 2003). Networks may be set up by government which then continues to govern hierarchically (Damgaard, 2006) or retain control, devolving managerial responsibility rather than power (Davies, 2005). The effect of metagoverning in relation to the power of non-state actors in networks will vary by case however.

3.3.2 Institutional Perspectives

Metagoverning arrangements for regeneration partnerships set in place basic rules and parameters for governing processes and resident participation, privileging state over resident power and limiting resident influence. There are, however, institutional aspects of governance networks which also have implications for how residents may be able to influence public services through regeneration programmes; these are discussed here using institutional theory. Regeneration partnerships are a specific type of institution, however; a discussion of how they can be understood in institutionalist terms is first presented, following which an examination of ‘culture’ and ‘calculus’ explanations of governing processes, following Hall and Taylor (1996), is carried out.

3.3.2.1 Regeneration Partnerships as Institutions

The story of ‘new governance’ has described institutional change, from hierarchies to markets to networks, at least in part (Newman, 2001). These new arrangements have

developed into patterns of cooperation to an extent: Kickert et al. argue that institutionalisation of network processes occurs from continual repeated interchanges between actors:

Information, goals and resources are exchanged in interactions. Because these interactions are frequently repeated, processes of institutionalization occur: shared perceptions, participation patterns and interaction rules develop and are formalized. The structural and cultural features of policy networks which come about in this way influence future policy processes.

(Kickert et al., 1997: 6)

This view regards governance networks as emerging institutions, which is useful in some respects (to be discussed below) but care is necessary in using what can be a broad term. Governance networks are loose arrangements of institutions and groups of actors rather than fixed institutions in the sense of formal organisations. They lack an institutional history and therefore path dependency, and are also normally temporary in nature, which creates further instability. Davies (2004) argues that partnerships such as NDC have not solidified into institutions governed by a set of rules; many NDCs are sites of conflict between actors and have overlapping governing mechanisms, and would not always last without central government involvement. Lowndes (2001) argues that new governance arrangements are the institutionalisation of weak ties, loose sets of different organisations with varying values, governed by a set of rules, and which signifies a shift from strong to weak institutional forms in urban politics. Organisations are linked by 'weak ties' of association (Lowndes and Wilson, 2001), compared to the more solid, formal links that exist within organisations, which creates ambiguity for how they operate since they depend on the voluntary engagement and interaction of actors.

As well as being an institution made up of a somewhat loose network of organisations, governance networks are also made up of individuals who represent these organisations rather than the organisations themselves. A governance network is more accurately described as a network of individuals therefore, particularly in the case of regeneration programmes since residents may represent an organisation such as a community group, may just represent their community or may not represent anyone. A governance network may have its own institutional structure and culture, but interactions will be

determined not only by the institutional environment of the governance network itself but also of the ‘home’ organisations or community settings of participants, each of which will embody different rules and entail different aims. Regeneration programmes are therefore institutionally complex settings within which actors engage with each other, where institutional rules and cultures overlap with each other. Furthermore, this network perspective emphasises the importance of understanding actors in governance contexts rather than viewing governance processes as being about interactions between ‘the state’ and ‘the community’.

Institutional approaches can be employed to explain the internal dynamics of governance networks, the ways in which actors cooperate in an institutional context, encompassing both structure and agency, and the dynamic between them. This focus on dynamics is central to the explanatory power of governance theory (Klijn and Koppenjan, 2000) and contributes to an understanding of the processes and impact of resident participation in governing³. In order to explore the complex dynamics of governance networks, institutional perspectives are adopted using two aspects: ‘culture’ and ‘calculus’ which refer to the cultural aspects of institutions such as unwritten rules or practices, and to rational actor behaviour. Various studies of participation policies and urban regeneration programmes are included here; not all draw on governance perspectives but they can be used to explore relevant aspects of governing.

3.3.2.2 *Culture*

The term ‘culture’ here is used broadly to refer to meanings, practices, norms and informal rules that operate in governance networks. These have an influence on resident opportunities and constraints for influence as well as the formal rules and parameters of governance structures described above as ‘metagovernance’. This perspective is that of sociological institutionalism which emphasises structural influences on actor behaviour:

³ Footnote: Regime theory has been adopted for this in some studies because it provides explanations for dynamics within urban coalitions. However, it is based on the US context of extensive business sector involvement where businesses are courted for their tax contributions, whereas the business sector tends to play a small role in UK partnerships (Davies, 2003). It is therefore rejected in favour of institutional theory.

Thus, the sociological institutionalists insist that, when faced with a situation, the individual must find a way of recognizing it as well as of responding to it, and the scripts or templates implicit in the institutional world provide the means for accomplishing both of these tasks, often more or less simultaneously.

(Hall and Taylor, 1996: 16)

This theoretical perspective became popular in the 1980s in response to a perceived over-emphasis on individuals' behaviour (Hall and Taylor, 1996; Lowndes, 2001). Within this view, actor behaviour takes place within 'logics of appropriateness', historical patterns of behaviour, rules, routines which are more significant than individual calculation (March and Olsen, 1989). To date, there has been extensive research showing how participation in partnerships is limited by institutional cultures which create constraints for resident participation, limiting the extent to which they might influence public services (Atkinson and Cope, 1997; Forrest and Kearns, 1999; Lupton, 2003; Perrons and Skyers, 2003; Barnes et al., 2003b; Dinham, 2005; Purdue, 2005).

Discourses, such as those of managerialism, can shape the nature of legitimacy and how decisions are made in organisations delivering public policy (Newman, 2001); the context of ideas and values becomes so established that it becomes difficult to challenge. Discourses embedded in regeneration programmes can limit 'what is possible' and therefore disempower local residents (Atkinson, 1999). Interests expressed by people can be very much shaped by culture and this can be negative since they can be manifestations of 'social control' (Kothari, 2001). Programme planning can be based on professional bodies of knowledge, known mainly to statutory agency staff, and that this defines how issues and problems are thought about. This could take the form of local residents identifying interests or concerns that appear acceptable or rational to professionals. This could be seen as a distortion because it excludes local, equally legitimate, perspectives, although it is promoted as 'objective knowledge' (Sanderson, 1999).⁴ Conflict may be a natural part of participation and indicate healthy

⁴ This perspective can be taken further by governmentality approaches which analyse of how subjects of governing are constructed (e.g. Taylor, 2007; MacLeavy, 2009). However, while this type of analysis raises important questions about the wider context of power, they will not be the focus of this thesis since the question of interest is that of instrumental participation.

discussion but may be suppressed (White, 1996) or averted through the cooption of residents (Shore and Wright, 1997). Barnes et al. (2007) state that collectivities based on ideas outside of public forums are stronger because they draw on other discourses., arguing that communities need to be able to draw on 'material and symbolic resources' of other groups as a resource to challenge dominant institutions.

Limitations in regeneration programmes also include practices such as meetings being held at inconvenient times or places (Camina, 2004); timetables being too fast (Perrons and Skyers, 2003); perceptions of 'cliques' being involved in programmes; cultural, skills and knowledge requirements which may effectively exclude some people (Stewart and Taylor, 1995; Atkinson and Cope, 1997; Hart et al., 1997; Forrest and Kearns, 1999; Sanderson, 1999; Coaffee and Healey, 2003; Lupton, 2003; Beresford and Hoban, 2005; Wallace, 2005). There are also barriers for residents such as technocratic language and systems and a 'consensus culture' making it difficult to challenge issues (Taylor, 2003a). Residents may also lack confidence, feel out of place (Lister, 2004) or feel unfamiliar and unable to negotiate technocratic aspects of programmes such as performance regimes (Taylor, 2003a). As a result of these various features of participatory forums, residents tend to find the culture and content of meetings inaccessible and unproductive (Wallace, 2005), although those in power often do not realise this (Stewart and Taylor, 1995).

Capacity building for residents enables residents to adapt to public sector ways of working, through training in meeting procedures for example, but carries the risk of cooption (Taylor, 2003a) and community representatives or groups can find themselves transformed into mirroring what is required of them by national programmes (Taylor, 2005). Furthermore, including people can be a good strategy for dealing with difficulties caused by disruptive or agitating communities and for co-opting them (Hastings et al., 1996; White, 1996). Community capacity building initiatives also promotes the idea of communities rather than public services needing improvement (Craig, 2007) since it is the local residents who have to surmount obstacles, not public officials (Gilchrist, 2003). When this happens, participation can become an imposition on communities (Wallace, 2005) especially as training is often required to enable local residents to gain relevant skills in order to participate, and adequate time and training can be lacking (Anastacio et al., 2000).

The place that participation now has in regeneration programmes does give residents some power (Jones, 2003) as NDC confers political capital onto local residents by putting pressure on public services and local authorities to include resident views in decision making, and residents may be able to claim this as a new source of legitimacy (Newman et al., 2004). Little change may occur as the result of participation (Taylor, 2003a) and may be implemented to give organisations legitimacy in a political environment where ‘community participation’ carries capital. Participation can be used to legitimise initiatives rather than to empower local people (McWilliams, 2004).

Services tend to be resistant to resident influence because of resource limitations or a perceived inability to change services (Barnes et al., 2007). Public services may resist participation because some public sectors workers have experienced change which has not improved services, only increased their workload, and this can make them resistant to further change (Smerdon and Robinson, 2004). Also, local authorities tend to have reservations concerning the representativeness of participation exercises, concerns about imposing too much consultation on communities, and raising local expectations to beyond what they have the resources to deliver (Birch, 2002). As a result, public organisations and agencies are under increasing pressure to incorporate participatory policies but may do so more on a symbolic level than implementing these policies in normal working practices (Barnes et al., 2007). One case study found that public officials tend to view participation in terms of increasing debate or information about local needs rather than challenging services (Ray et al., 2008). However, in some cases a more basic explanation is that some agencies lack a real will to engage and listen to their users (Audit Commission, 2003).

3.3.2.3 *Calculus*

Governance perspectives refer to interdependent interactions, exchanges, negotiations or deliberations; these are processes of governing which may reflect consensus or conflict, or both. These are dynamic interchanges between actors; rational actor explanations which account for the behaviour of actors within networks posits the basis of behaviour of different actors or groups in institutions as being based on self-interest, with institutions providing the parameters for this behaviour (Hall and Taylor, 1996) although rules in governance networks may not be particularly clear or well established.

Rational choice institutionalism can be employed to explore resident participation in governing as engagement within a set of rules (Lowndes, 2001; Taylor, 2003a; Rhodes, 2007). Klijn and Teisman (1997) employ a game theory version, describe policy-making in networks in terms of a game where actors employ strategies with a consideration of what other actors' strategies might be:

We define a game as an ongoing, sequential chain of (strategic) actions between different players (actors), governed by the players' perceptions and by existing formal and informal rules, which develop around issues for decisions in which the actors are interested.

(Klijn and Teisman, 1997: 101)

There are a variety of positions and motivations driving organisations in regeneration partnerships, such as achieving a specific aim through participating or preventing negative consequences for their own organisations (Edwards et al., 2000). Actors may adopt strategies but might also find themselves the objects of other people's strategies, and find ways to resist or cope with them. The 'game' of interaction is bounded by the formal and informal rules of the network. Actors have various resources they use in strategies, and may try to influence the rules of the game. This perspective brings out the uncertainty in network processes, since they are a complex interplay of actor strategies which change over time as perceptions and objectives change.

Regeneration programmes are inevitably sites of conflict since they bring together actors who have vastly different institutional and cultural contexts, and aims. Different groups may draw on different elements in regeneration policy according to their aims: regeneration programmes contain tensions, between attaining government goals versus community participation, and between efficiency and innovation (Ball and Maginn, 2005; Coaffee and Deas, 2008) which actors may draw on to support their positions. The public sector maintains control over resources and agendas, while residents may aspire to community development goals:

However, the experience of new consultative arrangements also brought problems in some neighbourhoods. Most commonly, there was a disjunction between the expectations of residents participating in these arrangements and the

professionals who sought to learn from them. Residents often believed that their input into consultative forums would form the base for rethinking or reformulating strategies and programmes. But these expectations were not always met. In some cases, the scale of financial resources available made it impossible to reformulate programmes in such a way. In other cases, the recommendations from these new consultative arrangements conflicted with the proposals and interests of other agencies, within or outside the neighbourhood, or they were not politically feasible for other reasons, e.g. because they were considered less important, relative to other issues.

(Cars et al., 2004: 236)

Public sector institutions have greater resources to bring to partnerships than other groups which is one of the ways they dominate them (Whitehead, 2007). The main resource residents bring to regeneration partnerships is local information about needs, and legitimacy for organisations which have to demonstrate participation.

Governance networks provide opportunities for actors to engage strategically in governing; however few residents tend to become involved regeneration programmes. These are the ‘activists’, ‘1% solution’, the social entrepreneurs (Skidmore et al., 2006) or the ‘natural joiners’ (Millward, 2005). a small group of committed residents, particularly in ‘high threshold’ activities which require more motivation to attend (Cars et al., 2004). Engagement, then, is ‘narrow but deep’: only a few people are heavily involved (Macmillan and Marshall, 2005). Participation tends to involve a small number of people, the ‘insiders’, who find it easier to become involved because they have been already in the past, and have the skills to do so. From services’ point of view, working with already knowledgeable residents at a local (and more easily comprehensible and relevant) rather than strategic level is easier (Ray et al., 2008).

Most residents largely exercise their agency not by engaging strategically in regeneration partnerships, but by avoiding them. Residents may not engage because of prohibitive public sector cultures; non-participation may be a combination of cultural and calculus factors therefore. In any case, whilst opportunities for resident participation have opened up in new forms of governing, rates of resident participation are generally low: ‘community’ participation rarely attracts the majority of residents (Hart et al., 1997; Forrest and Kearns, 1999; Hickey and Mohan, 2004; Macmillan and Marshall, 2005).

Nationally, rates of civic participation - defined as signing petitions, contacting public officials or representatives, or going to a public meeting, rally or demonstration - are lower than other types of participation (Attwood et al., 2003). Furthermore, attending meetings required for participation in regeneration is a less popular type of civic participation than others such as contacting a councillor (Attwood et al., 2003).

There are positive attitudes towards expressing an opinion, even if people do not always take up the opportunity to do so (Mori, 2005) and many more people say they support the idea of participation than would actually be willing to attend a local meeting (Duffy et al., 2008). Positive attitudes tend to tail off once more substantial involvement is suggested:

More than half of people (55%) say that they would be interested in being more involved in the decisions their local council makes, and a third of these would like to get involved in helping their council undertake detailed work on planning and delivering services. 82% support more community involvement, 26% are interested in being involved, but only 2% are actually involved.

(ODPM, 2005a: 8)

One possibility for low levels of involvement is that in any community only a minority of the local population will want to become involved in programmes, reflecting generally low interest in politics and low levels of voter turnout in the West, the 'democratic deficit' (Gaventa, 2004a). However, lower socio-economic groups tend to have lower participation rates (Barnes et al., 2002) even though regeneration programmes create more opportunities for them to do so. Awareness levels of opportunities to participate have tended to be low (Forrest and Kearns, 1999) but there is evidence that residents behave as rational actors avoiding the state as a survival strategy, for those who may be in conflict with some services, such as the police, or experience disapproval from them (Mathers et al., 2008). Equally, partners may not be engaged in partnerships for a variety of reasons such as the cost of engagement or perceived lack of benefit (Edwards et al., 2000). Residents may be active but in informal arenas, and avoid more formal participation because they feel hostility towards local authorities and public services because of perceived poor services (Annette and Creasy, 2007).

In New Deal for Community (NDC) areas and comparable deprived areas, levels of trust and involvement in local organisations have been much lower than the national average (Grimsley et al., 2005). Also, Beresford et al. (1999) found that those on low incomes can feel cynical about involvement bringing about any change. The Audit Commission (2003) argues that people do want to participate if activities are carried out well, and Hope and King (2005) reported that the two most significant factors in preventing people from taking part in local decision making were a lack of awareness of mechanisms to do so, and a belief that participation would not bring about any change. Local residents have not always embraced participation wholeheartedly because of fatigue and disillusionment with previous unsuccessful programmes or because they have not received feedback from their input (Carley et al., 2000; Richardson, 2005). The limited proportion of local residents involved in programmes can be perceived by professionals as the local population exhibiting apathy or a general lack of interest (Wallace, 2005) although non-engagement can also be seen as the active rejection of an unsatisfactory programme (White, 1996). Residents as rational actors in regeneration programmes, therefore, may engage strategically but this tends to be a small proportion who are able to engage most easily, while the majority of residents maintain a strategic distance.

3.3.2.4 Embedded Actors

Governance perspectives address the rules and norms of institutions which have undergone change, and how actors choose action within this framework (Kjaer, 2004). Sociological and rational actor perspectives can be combined to produce a holistic account of the dynamics of governance networks, overcoming the limitations of each perspective. Sociological institutionalism has a tendency to describe constraints to resident participation rather than providing explanations for the role of actors. Rational institutionalism, while it explains actor behaviour in more dynamic terms and provides for actor agency, is limited in that ‘rationality’ is de-contextualised: actors are assumed to strategically pursue aims within a rule-based context, where these aims are taken as somehow ‘objective’ rather than being embedded in a wider social context, which may underpin the actor’s personal values for example. Combining sociological and rational institutional theory, the ‘calculus’ and ‘cultural’ approaches (Hall and Taylor, 1996) can

account for behaviour comprising of strategies based on aims, which are culturally embedded thus explaining a dynamic between structure and agency:

Understanding how and why people participate, in turn, requires that we take a closer look at how would be participants... are constructed in discourses of participation, and how they construct their own engagement and entitlements: what spaces they are given, and what spaces they occupy as theirs.
(Cornwall, 2002: 51)

Governance network environments are a complex environment of individuals participating in governing processes where their attitudes, behaviours and relationships will be embedded in a context (Barnes et al., 2003a). The social context may be the programme: for example, New Labour's policies have contained a multiplicity of discourses and ideas, such as 'community' and decentralisation (Clarke et al., 2007) which actors may draw on strategically as they are enacted in policy in various ways. Furthermore, changes in the institutions and practices of public services which occurred in the 1980s and 1990s, such as decentralisation have created dynamic but unstable spaces (Clarke and Newman, 1997) which actors may take advantage of. Wider social contexts and values may also be relevant: citizens who participate are often driven by values or a sense of injustice (Barnes et al., 2006).

3.3.3 Summary

Regeneration partnerships create opportunities for resident influence but also significant constraints through metagovernance and institutional cultures. Metagoverning perspectives reveal the ways in which partnerships are structured which create limitations for resident influence. Institutional perspectives also demonstrate how resident participation and influence is often very limited, but that residents engage strategically nevertheless, often by not participating. Embedded rational actor perspectives begin to describe actors in a more holistic way, being driven by aims but within an institutional and social context; actor perspectives are explored more fully in the following section.

3.4 Network Dynamics

So far, regeneration programmes have been explored as a network of institutions in terms of their structures and institutional environments. Participation dynamics have been highlighted and explored, with reference to how far this perspective can explain participation processes. These perspectives have tended to emphasise ways in which resident influence is inhibited rather than any impact of resident participation on services; as such it does not provide a complete picture of resident participation dynamics and or its effects. This is not to say that regeneration programmes and public services are not challenging environments for resident influence, but that further explanation is needed in order to understand how change may occur. To understand resident influence, a more detailed understanding of actor dynamics in governance networks is necessary.

This section argues for the theoretical position that actors, as individuals, and the ties between them are particularly important in understanding the dynamics of governance networks. The network aspect of governance begins to hint at the specificity of the architecture of networks as arrangements of actors and relationships between them. The evidence presented so far has already indicated that actors are important in the participation process in regeneration because of how they choose to act within constraints within complex institutional contexts. This indicates a complex dynamic operating through individual people rather than groups: opportunity gaps for resident influence that exist within governance networks are embodied by actors. This thesis takes up governance network perspectives at this point and argues that one must understand actors and their ties in much more detail in order to understand participation processes. Using social network theory and the concepts of nodes, brokers and network ties, the dynamics of network governing can be explored. As such this section seeks to build a theory of participation dynamics in regeneration programmes by combining governance network perspectives with social network theory to produce an account of how brokers and network ties operate to produce governing outcomes.

3.4.1 Opportunity Structures

This section argues that, although regeneration programmes and public services are limited in the opportunities they present for resident influence, there are nevertheless aspects of governance networks which provide opportunities. Governance networks create opportunities for local actors to act beyond their institutional contexts. The varying ways in which professionals or residents might interpret participation differently may create tensions and an ‘unsettling’ of formal practices (Sullivan, 2009); this creates a more open field for actors in governance networks. For example, public agency employees may be more open to resident influence in networks because they are at some distance from their own institution and its associated norms.

Narayan (2005) identifies the ‘opportunity structure’ for empowerment as consisting of institutional factors and socio-political structures interacting with the ‘agency of the poor’, leading to development outcomes such as improved services. New social movement theory describes actors who make use of ‘opportunity structures’ (Tarrow, 1998); governance networks can be viewed as an opportunity structure for residents, albeit a very structured, managed one rather than the more organic, bottom-up processes of social movements. While the hierarchical mode of governing continues, through heavy state ‘steering’ of partnerships, the ‘network element’ of partnerships does create some opportunities for local resident participation, both through local residents becoming actors in the governing process and through other actors having more freedom to act at a distance from the state. Governance networks such as regeneration partnerships, rather than being discrete, defined institutions, are arrangements of individual actors who have unclear or indeterminate ties between them. These new opportunity spaces may enable residents to influence public services to some degree, and residents may be able to take advantages of opportunities that participatory policies provide despite the various problems of potential cooption, wider structural issues and so on. New governing environments are dynamic and changing, and create opportunities for residents such as through the new legitimacy for participation (Newman et al., 2004). One may view New Deal for Communities as an extension of state power, as an example of participation policies being aimed at shoring up the legitimacy of government and capitalism, and incorporating opposition, but it can also be seen as a way for residents to play a part in a complex policy field where there are multiple and overlapping forms and exercises of power (Taylor, 2000).

3.4.2 Social Network Theory

This section explores how governance networks are structured in terms of the nature and role of individual actors within a network, and the relationships between them. Social network theory and the two concepts of ‘nodes’ (discussed here as ‘brokers’) and ‘ties’ are employed to articulate individuals and their relationships, and to explain governing processes in more detail.

Social network theory dates back to the 1950s. It regards actors as interdependent, with relational ties between them through which resources and influence pass (Wasserman and Faust, 1994). These relationships can be represented as between a pair of individuals (a dyad) for example, an ego-centric network showing all the ties one individual has, or as a ‘whole world’ network where all the ties between many actors are represented. A regeneration programme can be conceptualised as a whole world model with parameters based on geographical location. Social network analysis focuses on relations between actors as a group and, like the concept of ‘community’, embodies the idea of belonging (Clark, 2007). Social networks operate at formal and informal levels and can be considered a vital aspect of community, bringing material support, information, moral support, health benefits to individuals and enabling people to act together for common interests (Gilchrist, 2004).

Social networks can be represented in a graph, a sociogram (Wasserman and Faust, 1994), enabling mathematical analysis; sociograms are part of a largely quantitative emphasis in social network theory. However, it is adopted here as a metaphor to represent actors and relationships (Knox et al., 2006) rather than as a mathematical model of social structures. Two key concepts in social network theory are explored: nodes and ties. These are used in graph theory to visually represent individuals (nodes) and the relationships between them (ties) (Wasserman and Faust, 1994).

3.4.3 Brokers

This section explores the role of actors, as nodes, in networks in terms of identifying actors as agents within networks. Their role is discussed here in terms of their brokering role, and they are therefore referred to here as ‘brokers’. This perspective contrasts with

the idea of the homogenous community discussed in Chapter Two, where residents are viewed in terms of a group.

3.4.3.1 Actors in Networks

Actors can be understood as individuals within networks rather than as being synonymous with ‘groups’ belonging to a partnership. Networks are arrangements of organisations, but also of individuals who represent those organisations. Actors in networks, while they belong to different organisations or communities, operate in the network partly as representatives of these groups but partly as individuals with their own ideas and values who may operate with some freedom in the network. This is especially true when actors’ identities or roles are fluid, for example Barnes et al. (2007) found that the distinction between residents or lay people and professionals is not always distinct, as residents can become experts and professionals may live in the area or have strong personal commitments to groups. Individuals within these groups vary widely and do not necessarily conform to the norms of one group or the other: professionals can be highly committed and sympathetic to community influence, and residents can become highly knowledgeable about local government. Furthermore, communities are internally diverse (Cars et al., 2004) and so the few representatives they have are never able to represent every group within the community (Gilchrist, 2003), and particular groups can be excluded such as ethnic minorities or young people (Cars et al., 2004). The characteristics, behaviour and role of the individual actor are therefore particularly important for governing processes in this context.

Individuals are embedded in various ‘home’ institutional environments and social contexts, with their corresponding aims, in governance networks. Actors’ understanding and engagement in governance will be terms of their particular context, beliefs and traditions (Rhodes, 2000; Bevir and Richards, 2009a). Furthermore, actors are not merely conduits of institutional forces since they will manage the tensions between these according to their own personalities, values and judgements (e.g. Lipsky, 1980) and the various institutional and cultural forces are managed by individuals in unique ways. This perspective draws out the diversity of actors in terms of their perspectives and the complex way they interact based on their understandings, and draws attention to

the dynamics of network interactions (Hoff, 2003). One study of partnerships illustrated the importance of actors in the policy process:

In judging the effectiveness of policy and procedures often far too little attention is given to the role of key individuals in shaping that process. All the evidence presented here indicates that particular people matter whether as leaders or participants.

(Edwards et al., 2000: 40)

Actors play a role in governance network processes in various ways, described here as brokers. Brokers are nodes in the network who perform various functions to enable participation processes, who are more significant in various ways than other nodes.

3.4.3.2 Brokers as Bridges

Some individuals in networks link different groups and function as a point of contact and effectively enlarge a network by doing this. Individuals may be connected to others even if not in immediate contact, since intermediate individuals in networks link others (Ball, 2008): Milgram's early work on social networks found that particular individuals were well connected compared to others (Milgram, 1967).

The roles of brokers, or 'change agents' (Taylor, 2004) are important in making ties within and between the community and partnerships. For example, community leaders need to build two types of relationship: those with people in the community and those in partnerships (Purdue, 2001). Residents participating in partnerships "*act as brokers connecting informal community networks to more formal institutional networks*" (Purdue, 2001: 2218). In this way residents who participate, defined here as 'active residents', link non-involved residents to initiatives such as regeneration programmes. Active residents who participate in regeneration programmes are particular individuals who tend to be motivated and experienced, having prior experience of regeneration programmes (Hastings et al., 1996; Richardson, 2005). Although New Deal for Communities boards must be made up of at least 50% of local residents, those already involved in local groups had a greater chance of being involved and elected, leaving non-involved residents with little improvement in their levels of participation (Dinham,

2005). Active residents may provide a bridge between regeneration programmes and communities in some instances however. The shape of networks, then, is influenced by brokers even if other structural parameters have been determined by the state or public bodies.

3.4.3.3 Discretion of Brokers

Actors in governance networks operate with some measure of discretion in their roles, and this opens up opportunities for resident influence in these spaces. The looseness of ties between organisations, groups or individuals has implications for how networks operate, for example although public service employees use their own discretion within organisations sometimes (Lipsky, 1980), networks may create greater scope for self-determined action and this may in turn create opportunities for greater responsiveness to local residents. Therefore, understanding these new spaces in governance requires an understanding of how individuals exercise their discretion, albeit within their own community and institutional contexts.

Embedded rational actor theory posits that actors pursue aims within a context of rules but also within social contexts. In governance networks, actors, whether local authorities, public services (Newman, 2001) or community groups (Barnes et al., 2007) will draw on particular discourses or stories beyond the immediate institutional environment and these may be in tension with others in the network: values may not be based on those promoted by the governance network. Individual actors are afforded further flexibility in this structure since they may have some detachment in this environment from their 'home' institutions. Individual actors may also be motivated by various factors including their personal and career histories, character, values and attitudes. Decisions may not be entirely dictated by their institutional context or solely driven by clear protocols but are managed by the individual. Because behaviour and choices are less prescribed in governance network environments compared to formal organisations, the discretion of individuals becomes more important and the values and motivations of individuals take on more significance. This 'looseness' creates some space for the agency of actors to influence processes and residents may be able to use the ambiguity and opportunity gaps in governance networks to their own ends.

Local government tends to be a more powerful actor in regeneration partnerships and has influence over the formal rules and institutional cultures of local regeneration partnerships more than others, but these are also open to be contested by other actors. Taylor (2005) cites typical resistance from organisations and local authorities to resident influence, although some individuals within these are more open to participation. While institutional cultures may present constraints for resident influence, some local authority or public service staff may engage in '*revising, resisting or refusing policy imperatives*' (Prior, 2009: 32).⁵ Local public service workers do not just cope with conflicting demands but may take an active 'entrepreneurial' approach to judging and reacting to local situations based on their local knowledge (Durose, 2009). This may be beneficial for resident influence: "*There are windows of opportunity and cracks in the system; there are allies in the most uncompromising institutions.*" (Taylor, 2003a: 224). Brokers can then take community aspirations and feed them into policies (Ray et al., 2008). Furthermore, some institutional cultures provide staff with more discretion: public service managers working in partnerships may be given a certain amount of discretion to solve local problems (Smith et al., 2006). Some public services often have 'champions' who take on and support ideas about community participation within their organisation even if this does not bring career rewards (Taylor, 2003a).

Emmel et al. (2007) found that residents in low-income estates often achieve a response from public services through trusted intermediate professionals who were helping them with another issues. Some individuals in public organisations are more inclined to respond to residents than others and this factor can be more important than organisational rules or procedures (Fagotto and Fung, 2006). In some cases, public sector workers may change services in response to local residents, but in an unofficial capacity in order to deliver a better service, and this may remain largely hidden if it represents a departure from officially sanctioned ways of working:

⁵ Participatory initiatives and new governance structures can also be conceptualised as creating new institutions where new practices are introduced, thereby creating instability and therefore opportunities for new rules to be formed (Barnes et al., 2007). Actors may not be completely captured by structures and the complexity and layers of institutions and practices may create opportunities for actors to change structures (Hoff, 2003). This aspect of participatory dynamics, however, addresses the influence of actors on structures more than the processes and outcomes of resident influence on public services, and will not be the focus of this research.

The SEZ [Social Enterprise Zone] has often encountered public sector staff... who admit to using their discretion, but the majority never admit it to managers. Even senior managers admit that they have never felt that they could or should tell their superiors about occasions when it has been useful to use discretion. There is no incentive to do so. And yet this means that this wealth of experience about 'what works' remains hidden, and the rules remain the same.

(Smerdon and Robinson, 2004: 30)

3.4.3.4 Brokering Tensions

Because actors often occupy spaces in regeneration partnerships where they are subject to several accountability mechanisms (to central government and to residents for example) in more than one institutional environment, and also have their own values and motivations, brokers in networks may experience tensions between these different elements. The overlapping of different aims within regeneration programmes, particularly the drive towards centralisation through performance targets and auditing but also the emphasis on community participation leads to conflict between and within actors who have to manage these different demands (Newman et al., 2004). Managers of programmes can face tensions between working for local communities and at the same time representing a local authority in an area who is their employer (Whitehead, 2003). Personnel employed to work with residents are both champions of resident voice but may also be employed by organisations with divergent interests, a common point of tension for community development workers (Kenny, 2002; Loughry, 2002; Hoggett et al., 2009). They therefore may also face tensions in their roles:

... both officials and citizens are actively engaged in a process of working out what is 'the right thing to do' in particular contexts, drawing on both professional and personal identities and values, personal and professional identifications and experiences, and assessing the possibilities and limitations of the institutional rules and norms and actively engaged in determining how and indeed whether they should be applied in specific contexts. They operate within, but also reflect on and rework, policy discourses and regimes of practice.

(Barnes and Prior, 2009: 206)

Active residents face tensions in coping with the demands and power struggles of governance structures while also coping with their accountability to their communities (Purdue et al., 2000). Managing tensions is therefore an issue for actors in governance networks, particularly those who act as bridges between residents and the public sector where accountabilities, cultures and aims are very different.

3.4.4 Network Ties

So far the discussion of governance as networks has described the various characteristics and roles of network nodes who act as brokers in governing processes. This section explores the relationships between these brokers in more detail, in terms of ‘network ties’, in order to explain processes of governing more closely.

3.4.4.1 The Nature of Ties

Network ties can be defined in a variety of ways but link actors in certain ways, whether through interaction, social or family relationship or exchange (Wasserman and Faust, 1994). Ties may refer to the mere existence of some sort of relationship, the nature of the relationship such as degree of affective content, or to the resources or other benefits exchanged through the tie. They tend to be referred to in positive terms but also have negative aspects such as excluding others (Taylor, 2000; Kjaer, 2004).

Ties in social networks are often described in terms of typologies of ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ ties (Granovetter, 1973)⁶. Strong ties relate to families and close friends while weak ties have a wider reach, extend to relationships in more public (i.e. less personal) aspects of life and are much more useful in gaining resources. The implication of this is that people in deprived areas should cultivate weak ties in order to gain influence in local governing. Ties are also often referred to in terms of their utility, without reference to

⁶ The concept of ‘social capital’ is often used to refer to social ties and tends to emphasise the utility aspect of ties. This concept of social capital is rejected in favour of ‘network ties’ because it is unclear about many facets such as whether it belongs to the individual or community and what it produces (Lin, 1999). It also tends to describe social ties as something ‘belonging’ to people, as capital does, rather in terms of relationships between people as the concept of network ties does.

affective or ethical aspects of relationship (Clark, 2007), although these two aspects are not necessarily exclusive. This section explores regeneration programmes in terms of strong and weak ties, and argues that this distinction between strong and weak ties is far from clear cut, and that strong ties have a significant role to play in residents' ability to influence public services.

3.4.4.2 Weak Ties

Governance networks have been described earlier as being institutions which hold organisations and other actors together by weak ties in contrast to stronger ties in formal organisations (Lowndes, 2001). Geddes (2006) argues that partnerships are made up of weak ties which are weaker than those ties within organisations: influences occurring in partnerships are therefore weaker than those within an organisation. The concept of weak ties described by Granovetter (1973) or bridging social capital (Putnam, 2000) denotes relationships between people which are not personally close but which provide individuals with useful links to a greater variety of people and therefore wider opportunities. Regeneration programmes provide opportunities for residents through the building of weak ties between communities, or at least their representatives, and public organisations which provide services, through contact in public meetings for example. This may be inhibited by lower levels of trust and not feeling part of the local community, leading to lower levels of participation in organisations in deprived areas such as NDC areas (Grimsley et al., 2005), but the existence of a regeneration partnership creates weak ties with at least some residents.

These weak tie relationships are the setting for the interactions of governance, which are often described in terms of exchange:

Although there may be conflict within such encounters, action is negotiated through networks characterised by relationships of co-dependence and reciprocity.
(Newman et al., 2004: 217)

Ties may vary in respect of what is transferred (Crow, 2004) and may be reciprocal though not necessarily symmetrical (Wellman, 1983); as discussed earlier residents are often disadvantaged in governance networks because they have fewer resources. In

governance networks, exchanges take place across these ties and can be framed, for example, as interaction where actors work cooperatively, exchanging resources or information, resulting in ‘co-governance’ (Kooiman, 2003). As noted above in the discussion about embedded rational actors, residents and public services bring different resources to partnerships: residents have local information and the ability to provide legitimacy to public agencies, while public services have material and financial resources that residents need. This model of weak ties in governance networks is one of impersonal relationships between actors engaged in exchange.

3.4.4.3 Strong Ties

‘Strong ties’ by contrast are defined as closer, more personal links between individuals, less associated with organisations or the public sphere. Granovetter defines strong ties in the following way:

Most intuitive notions of the “strength” of an interpersonal tie should be satisfied by the following definition: the strength of a tie is a (probably linear) combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie. Each of these is somewhat independent of the other, though the set is obviously highly correlated.

(Granovetter, 1973: 1361)

These may also exist in governance networks. Maguire and Truscott (2006), in a qualitative study of LSPs, report that one of the most significant effects of resident participation had been the building of new and better relationships between local residents and service providers. A study of Community Empowerment Networks also found that in some (though not all) cases, contact with local authority officials and service providers improved in quantity and quality (Taylor et al., 2005). This indicates that more personal, ‘strong’ ties may also be significant, perhaps especially where professionals are working with local residents in the more personal spaces of residents’ local neighbourhoods. Strong ties may emerge in less formal spaces of governance networks and through one-to-one relationships rather than in public meetings, take longer to develop and may be seen in more mature networks (Provan et al., 2005).

Strong ties are related to the emotional content of relationships between residents and public agencies: people have expressed a desire for more personal relationships rather than anonymous transactions in public services (Clarke and Newman, 2006). Processes of participation more generally also have an emotional content but are underplayed, as participatory processes are seen in linear, rational terms (Hoggett and Miller, 2000). Participatory environments often try to suppress emotions such as anger which inhibits some aspects of communication: “*emotional expression will often be necessary to communicate the substance of the issues to be addressed*” (Barnes, 2008: 476). This view of network ties challenges the ‘rational discourse’ model of deliberation as it ignores more affective aspects of communication highlighted by a more feminist perspective (Newman, 2005).

There is also evidence that people become engaged in participatory activity through social networks and affective ties rather than through making calculations about benefits (Barnes et al., 2006). Social contact appears to draw people into some types of participation, through being asked or hearing about things through word of mouth for example (Brodie et al., 2009).

3.4.4.4 Social Networks in Deprived Areas

Communities in deprived areas have been characterized as either lacking in social networks, or in having too many strong ties and too few weak ties, which inhibits their ability to become part of governance networks and therefore weakens their ability to influence public services. Social exclusion can imply relational factors, non-involvement and a lack of social ties (Taylor, 2003a) and as a result increasing the risk of other aspects of social exclusion such as unemployment and poor health (Barnes et al., 2007). Ties may be more difficult for residents in deprived areas who have less time or resources to maintain them, requiring more energy for getting by (Taylor, 2004). Some deprived areas which have experienced industrial decline and the loss of jobs may have a consequent damage to social networks, or some may have high residential churn (Taylor, 2004).

However, deprived areas may be characterized by geographical immobility and dense social networks (Clark, 2007), as having strong rather than weak ties. Furthermore,

residents in deprived areas tend to participate at the informal level and are involved in material, reciprocal aid to each other. This is in contrast to activities such as joining groups or volunteering which tends to be a feature of social networks in less deprived areas (Attwood et al., 2003; Williams, 2004; Agur and Low, 2009). Those living in such areas may not view themselves as lacking in ties since they may remain in areas because of their personal social and family networks (Cameron, 2006a) which provide them with resources, although these are limited (Taylor, 2003a).

Strong ties, however, can be regarded as producing tendencies for groups to be inward-looking rather than making external connections, thus keeping different groups in society separate from each other (Granovetter, 1973). Granovetter (1973) made further claims that a lack of weak ties associated with low-income groups harmed their ability to engage assistance when they needed it and therefore contributed to poverty, although he noted that strong ties may be better for some types of help because of increased motivation to provide assistance, and they are also easier to access than weak ties.

Residents of deprived areas, therefore, may not necessarily be lacking in ties, although they may have a greater number of strong rather than weak ties, which are useful to them but may be less visible due to their informal nature.

3.4.4.5 Network Ties and Changes in Services

Both weak and strong ties are aspects of governance networks, though weak ties receive more recognition in terms of their utility in networks. It is argued here that brokers, strong ties and informal aspects of governance spaces function together in governance networks which may enable residents to influence public services.

Ties between brokers in governance networks affect the processes of governing, and have utility for residents in terms of how they may influence services. Brokers bridge some individuals or groups with each other and can also be sympathetic individuals who promote participation through discretion. These indicate strong rather than weak ties. Relationships are likely to develop between community representatives and public officials in deliberative forums (Barnes et al., 2007) as they work closely together; some of these officials will be those most sympathetic to resident aspirations to the extent that

they may experience tension between these sympathies and their own organisation's priorities (Barnes et al., 2007). There is evidence that relationships between brokers in networks are important in affecting participation outcomes, for example as "*informal dialogue was valued as a way in which communities could more effectively get their concerns on to the agenda*" (Ray et al., 2008: 47) as decisions are sometimes made outside of formal decision making structures. Even within local authorities which continued to have formal hierarchical structures, senior managers have to work more across boundaries and in informal ways, build relationships and network (Tichelar and Watts, 2000), although public officials tend to view improved relationships in terms of reducing conflict rather than increasing resident influence (Ray et al., 2008). Relationships formed can improve 'communication and awareness' between service users and providers (Audit Commission, 2003) and informal arenas may increase the amount of information exchanged (Taylor, 2004).

Relationships in informal spaces may be important in network governing processes:

For many of the Pathfinders their most productive work with service providers was often outside formal board meetings – in one-to-one relationships or through thematic working groups or service provider networks.

(SQW Ltd., 2004: 3)

Several partnership coordinators felt this informal contact to be more important in the effective working of the partnership than the formal meetings.

(Edwards et al., 2000: 23)

Change can occur through the actions of and relationships between individuals, and through the use of informal influence and behaviour instead of formal mechanisms or institutional rules (Lipsky, 1980; Edwards et al., 2000; Camina, 2004). Those in communities working with sympathetic people in various institutions to bring about change may be able to work through informal networks as well as through formal relationships, but greater understanding of these is needed (Taylor, 2003a).

3.4.5 Brokers and Ties in Context

Governance networks are made up of weak and strong ties between brokers. These ties play a role in governing processes, including in informal governance spaces. It is not the suggestion here that governing should be analysed purely in terms of networks but that they should be analysed within the social context they are embedded in (Clark, 2007). The types of relationships forged between actors in a governance network will depend on their institutional and cultural contexts, for example residents may distrust professionals or public officials because of a community's history. It is argued that brokers and network ties are embedded within institutional arrangements in governance networks, and that they can overcome some of institutional and structural constraints of governing networks which inhibit resident influence.

3.4.6 Summary

This chapter has so far explored the dynamics of governing through networks in a regeneration context with respect to structural constraints and opportunities for actors. The concept of metagovernance draws attention to the state exercise of power in setting up and managing networks, restricting the ability of residents to exert influence. Institutional perspectives illustrate the dynamics of governance networks through describing actors from different institutional backgrounds engaging in a network, which itself has its own institutional culture, and illustrates how cultural aspects of governance networks also constrain residents' ability to influence services. Embedded rational actor perspectives begin to describe how actors pursue their aims in a network environment and provide a more actor-oriented account of governing processes, although residents are disadvantaged by a comparative lack of resources. Together these perspectives highlight ways in which residents engaging in governance networks experience constraints in their ability to influence services. The discussion has then moved on to an analysis of governance networks using social network theory which is more explicit about individuals and their relationships in networks, and how this can provide an explanation for change. Governance networks provide opportunities for brokers to operate with more freedom and to facilitate governing processes such as resident influence. Additionally, the concepts of strong and weak ties articulate the nature of relationships between actors in networks and indicate that strong ties in particular have

potential to promote resident influence. Social network theory thereby contributes to governance perspectives through providing an explanation of governing processes and change.

3.5 Research Question

Governance network perspectives contribute to an understanding of the dynamics of resident participation within regeneration programmes. However, it is necessary to combine governance perspectives with social network theory, including the particular concepts of brokers and network ties, in order to explain the dynamics of change. How brokers and network ties operate is theoretically underdeveloped however, and it is to this deficit that the thesis is addressed.

The research question is therefore: *how can the influence which residents may exercise on public services, through their participation in governance networks, be explained by reference to the role of brokers and network ties?*

This thesis investigates this question empirically through a case study of a regeneration programme, and changes in local services focusing on environmental services in particular. The specific research objectives were:

- To assess the participation dynamics of a regeneration programme in a local governance context with respect to how metagoverning arrangements and cultural aspects created opportunities and constraints for resident participation and influence. This is discussed in Chapter Five.
- To explore how different actors engaged strategically in a governance network to pursue their aims, and the implications of this for resident participation and influence. This is also discussed in Chapter Five.
- To identify and explain participation processes of resident influence which occurred in a governance network through network brokers and ties. This is described in Chapter Six.

- To explore how public services changed in response to resident participation, through brokers and network ties in a governance network, in the context of wider causes of changes in public services. This objective is explored in Chapter Seven.

The first objective addresses structural constraints that exist within governance networks, while the second and third address actor-oriented explanations for network dynamics. The fourth objective is concerned with how these network processes produce changes in public services.

The unit of analysis was a local governance network, which consisted of a regeneration partnership and the local governance context it was embedded in.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed a theoretical framework for understanding regeneration partnerships as governance networks, where various non-state actors are provided with, albeit sometimes limited, opportunities to participate in governing for local public services in the context of metagovernance, institutional constraints and competing aims between actors. While governance perspectives are comprehensive, they have tended to draw on theoretical approaches which have emphasised institutional and structural constraints to resident influence. The notion of ‘networks’ within a governance perspective is therefore employed to draw attention to the role of individuals in governing processes and the relationships between them in order to provide a more detailed explanation for governing processes and outcomes. A research question and research objectives were then presented which set out the focus of research for the thesis.

4 Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will examine ways in which the outcomes of resident participation in governing networks can be researched, including explanations of processes which lead to outcomes. The previous chapter outlined governance network theory and how it can be applied to regeneration programmes to explain processes and outcomes of resident participation through a detailed examination of network dynamics, and brokers and relationships within networks. Networks have more often been analysed using quantitative methods; however here the interest is in the details of network processes but also their outcomes, and therefore a predominantly qualitative approach is used. Furthermore, in order to capture data about cultural aspects of network dynamics, and weak and strong ties, an in-depth qualitative method was necessary. The first part of this chapter explores approaches to researching the processes and outcomes of participation, and outlines a conceptual framework which underpinned the research. This chapter will then outline a methodology for the study.

4.2 Researching Governance Processes

This study was concerned with resident influence and therefore required a methodological approach which could explain resident participation with reference to its impact on public services. There has been a lack of focus on outcomes in research on governance, participation and area-based initiatives (Lawless, 2007). This gap is particularly significant from residents' perspectives since they tend to participate in regeneration partnerships in order to impact public services, rather than other reasons such as increasing social cohesion. Research in this area has been limited by two factors: conceptual and methodological difficulties.

4.2.1 Conceptual Challenges

Both governance perspectives and participation are under-theorized areas with respect to outcomes. A key conceptual challenge is that both instrumental participation and governance both imply change in power, which is difficult to operationalise. Governance, similarly, has been welcomed as including non-state actors in governing in a normative sense. This thesis has operationalised power with respect to instrumental participation: that resident aspirations lead to changes in public services. While this is a relatively simple and limited use of the concept of power, questions arise when applying the concept, such as whether unrealised aspirations always indicate a lack of power. Burton (2003) also claims that research on participation has been obscured by the acceptance of participation as a 'good thing' at the cost of analytical rigour: the concept as it is used therefore lacks clarity and theoretical underpinning (Burton et al., 2006).

4.2.2 Methodological Challenges

There is a need for studies with better methodologies for researching the impact of participation (Burton et al., 2004). This is challenging however, as regeneration programmes, participation and decision making processes involve many actors, are complex and are inherently unpredictable (Richardson, 1983; Burton et al., 2006). Linking outcomes to processes involves specifying a causal chain of events is difficult because of the multiplicity of potential causes for any occurrence. Furthermore outcomes of participation are also inherently complex and are enmeshed in their context:

Complexity stems from at least two factors. Firstly, ABIs are designed to be complex by virtue of their ambition to join-up many strands of action into a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. Secondly, community involvement is not straightforward in principle or in practice and thus exhibits conceptual complexity. Furthermore, involvement is not a fixed entity, nor is it a substantive intervention in the same way as building advance factory units or renovating poor quality housing. Rather it embodies a procedural principle and hence is an approach to decision making that allows and indeed encourages great

variability. More or fewer people can be more or less involved in the many aspects of decision making and the value of their contributions will vary.
(Burton et al., 2006: 32-33)

Furthermore, clear indicators for community participation have been lacking (Chanan, 2003). This section explores approaches which have been described in the participation literature which has tended to focus more at the micro-level compared to governance studies. Furthermore, governance studies have tended to concentrate on analyses of institutional arrangements rather than governing processes, often at a theoretical rather than empirical level.

4.2.2.1 Control Studies

Researching participation outcomes could indicate a study using a control to identify causes of change; studies to isolate cause and effect usually employ experimental designs. However, (Burton et al., 2006), in a systematic review, found no studies using an experimental design of participation in area based initiatives due to the difficulties in the application of this methodology for this type of programme. In any case, this method does not overcome the ‘black box’ problem of explaining how participatory processes operate to cause outcomes.

4.2.2.2 Perceptions of Influence

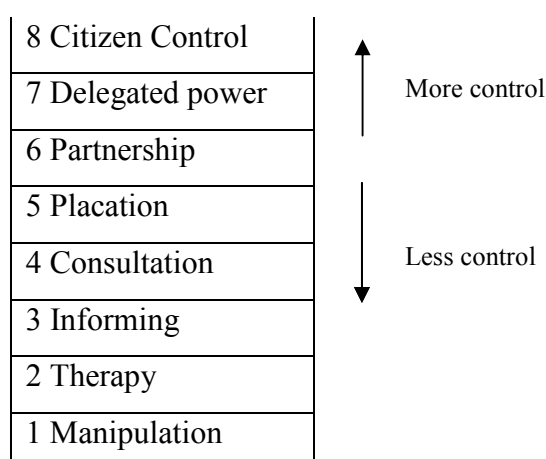
One method of assessing influence is to measure perceptions of having influenced a process or services, through surveys, interview questions or evaluation toolkits (e.g. Chanan, 2004). This method has been used widely at the local authority level following ODPM guidance (Andrews et al., 2006), for example in the testing of Quality of Life indicators (Humm et al., 2005) and a study of engagement in LSPs (NAO, 2004). Feelings of influence have also been measured in regeneration programmes, such as the NDC survey (Mori, 2005). American studies have also used psychological scales to measure empowerment at an individual level, identifying various aspects of a psychological construct of individual empowerment, and how this relates to organisational and community level empowerment (Zimmerman, 2000). Measuring perceptions has several drawbacks however. Firstly, perceived influence is very

subjective: one might question the validity of, for example, surveys which find that local authorities report they are responsive to local aspirations (Birch, 2002; Enticott et al., 2002). Secondly, satisfaction levels are unstable indicators since they depend on several variables apart from service outcomes, including: age and gender, the gap between expectations of a service and what is actually received, and interpersonal factors (Sitzia and Wood, 1997). Secondly, this approach only measures outcomes and does not explain what caused them.

4.2.2.3 *Arnstein's Ladder*

Other methods have attempted to assess participation more in respect of the entire process rather than outcomes. A well-known example of this is a framework for participation: Arnstein's 'Ladder of Participation'. Arnstein (1969) developed a model of participation, based on observations of programmes in the US. Her model (see figure 4.1 below) is a hierarchical one in which control, as a quality of participation, increases further up the ladder. There is a continuum of participation with '1' being the least desirable or weakest form of participation and '8' being the type of participation which gives people the most control:

Figure 4.1: Arnstein's Ladder of Participation



Adapted from Arnstein (1969)

This model has been adopted by some evaluations to a degree and can highlight deficiencies in participatory initiatives: for example, the evaluation of the

Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Programme found that community participation tended to be fairly limited and tended to not go beyond consultation (SQW Ltd., 2004). However, participation processes are not designed to hand over complete control to local residents or service users; what is more usual is a process of negotiation between different opinions or interests with some kind of settlement between them. The total empowerment of one party, gaining control at the top of Arnstein's ladder, is not the aim of governance networks. Furthermore, Arnstein's model does not articulate in detail the ways in which participation might operate as a mechanism. While this model has strengths in that it articulates and applies a concept of power or empowerment (as 'control'), thus attempting to overcome one of the main conceptual challenges in researching participation, knowing that residents can have more control in a programme does not in reveal the underlying processes involved in changing local services.

4.2.2.4 Evaluations Frameworks

Other methods have attempted to explain whole participation processes in more detail, either through evaluation frameworks or through qualitative studies (e.g. Burns and Taylor, 2000; COGS, 2000; Burns et al., 2004; Lowndes et al., 2006). These often examine institutional arrangements for participation. Laverack (2001), for example, describes nine domains of empowerment which can be used to plan or evaluate an intervention (Laverack, 2005), such as leadership and organisational structure. Alsop and Heinsohn's (2005) provide an alternative empowerment framework which incorporates both the agency of the individual or group (measured by psychological, material and other assets), degrees to which choices exist, are used and are realised, and 'opportunity structure' (social, political or economic context) at the local, meso and macro levels within which choices operate. These frameworks are useful in that they address the institutional and actor aspects of participation in a dynamic way. Narayan, writing about empowerment in an international development context, suggests that a framework must include the concepts of an 'opportunity structure' and 'agency of the poor':

... empowerment is fundamentally a relational concept, emerging out of the interaction between poor people and their environment.

(Narayan, 2005: 6)

This type of framework takes the complexity of governing arrangements into account while also enabling explanations of actor behaviour to emerge. However, one danger with some evaluation approaches, already noted in the international development field, is that they can become technocratic exercises rather than addressing the political and power dynamics inherent in participation (Hickey and Mohan, 2004). Change can occur in communities but be missed by evaluations because programmes are only measured in terms of official agendas rather than resident aspirations (Dinham, 2005). In addition, by themselves they tend to describe processes rather than outcomes.

4.2.2.5 *Qualitative Research*

The extensive qualitative research literature on participation and urban regeneration (discussed in Chapter Three) has largely focused on participation processes rather than outcomes. A small number of studies have mentioned that outcomes such as shaping and improving local services have occurred (e.g. Khamis, 2000; Burton et al., 2004) but lack detail as to how these have come about. Some studies have also depended on interviews with those involved in programmes rather than residents who are not involved (Burton et al., 2004). The evaluation of Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders (SQW Ltd., 2004) which were designed to increase coordination of neighbourhood services around resident needs took a more systematic approach by counting the number of changes which had occurred in various services, such as PCTs and the police. This study found that some services had changed, though this tended to be 'modest in scale'. While counting different changes to services is a somewhat crude method of demonstrating change it does give some indication of how responsive services are and in which areas, in contrast to many qualitative studies which tend to be fairly vague about the extent to which services have been influenced. This approach does not link outcomes to the processes that caused them however.

4.2.3 Summary

The various approaches to researching participation outlined above attempt to either address the detail of participation processes, or identify outcomes, without examining the process in its entirety from participant aspirations to public service outcomes. While explaining resident participation as a process which leads to particular outcomes is very

difficult because of the conceptual challenges and the complexity of governing arrangements and processes, a 'theory of change' method may go some way further towards achieving this type of explanation and is discussed in the following section.

4.3 Theory of Change Framework

While the implementation of regeneration programmes and other participatory policies have been researched, there has been limited research on the extent to which local residents influence local services: the instrumental outcomes of participation (Tunstall, 2001; Burton et al., 2004; Burton et al., 2006). For this study, a research approach was needed that explored a process of change within a context of governance networks that accounted for both process and outcome:

Given the difficulty in identifying and distinguishing devolution, participation and particular levels of them, and in identifying their effects, greater examination of the processes through which they operate and might achieve effects would be useful.

(Tunstall, 2001: 2499)

This section discusses 'theory based' approaches which use the underpinning theory of an intervention, which links processes and outcomes, as a framework for research and analysis. This section will then outline a 'theory of change' model as a conceptual framework for researching the instrumental aims of participation. It should be noted here that this framework is being used as a conceptual model for the collection and analysis of data on participation processes and outcomes, rather than being used as a theoretical basis for the thesis.

4.3.1 Conceptual Framework: Theory of Change

Regeneration programmes are complex initiatives which are based on underlying rationales for intervention. These can be used as a basis for researching their processes and outcomes:

The reconciliation of process and outcome in evaluating complex community initiatives can be in part carried out by the introduction of a rigorous articulation of the theory of change implicit in the intervention.
(Hughes and Traynor, 2000: 48)

Burton et al. (2006) also propose a ‘theory based approach’ as a resolution to some of the methodological gaps in participation research. Theories of change articulate the (perceived) processes which take place in interventions or programmes, their ‘underlying logic’ (Burton et al., 2006), and guide the researcher in what to explore. The logic of a programme articulates why an intervention is undertaken and what policy-makers expect to happen as a result of the intervention. The most popular version of this approach is the ‘theory of change’, promoted by Chen (1990) who defines it as:

A specification of what must be done to achieve the desired goals, what other important impacts may also be anticipated, and how these goals and impacts would be generated.
(Chen, 1990: 43)

The theory of change model encapsulates the notion that *change* takes place in the world as a result of resident participation: something different should happen, or have the potential to happen, compared to what would have happened otherwise. This is also central to the idea of instrumental participation. A theory of change implies a theory of causation, though one could also employ the concept of the weaker notion of ‘contingencies’, which provide an explanation of why things happen (Becker, 1998). Contingencies are events which precede other events, in a chain (similar to the idea of a causal chain) but the concept merely acknowledges that events occur after a particular chain of preceding events rather than making a strong claim about ‘causes’.

Theories of change also link processes with outcomes and overcome the ‘black box’ problem of knowing that change has occurred, but not knowing how. This is similar to Burns et al.’s (2004) suggestion of using a ‘decision trail’ to measure outcomes. This involves tracking issues that communities bring up and tracing them through decision making processes to ascertain whether the issues are considered and applied, “*Using a decision trail would be like putting dye in the system and seeing where it flows through and where it gets blocked.*” (Burns et al., 2004: 9).

‘Theories of change’ make explicit assumptions about the rationale for and intended aims of social interventions in order to articulate and distinguish the various elements of a process, although the underlying hypotheses of interventions are not always developed or made explicit in research on participation (Burton et al., 2004). Pawson and Tilley (1997) take a similar approach in their notion of ‘realistic evaluation’, identifying processes and outcomes, but also emphasising context. As such, theory of change approaches are useful for addressing complex governing arrangements and for exploring how processes lead to outcomes, and thereby understanding something of what causes change as a result of the intervention (DCLG, 2006).

In evaluations, theories of change are normally identified with research subjects at the beginning of the intervention and these are then drawn together to be used as the basis of the evaluation (Milligan et al., 2006). Theories of change are used to monitor the programme throughout its life as a means of checking whether implementation and expected outcomes are occurring as anticipated (Chen, 1990). For this study, the model was used as a research framework to guide the fieldwork and analysis, and was not discussed with research participants. The value of the framework was to collect and analyse data on processes and subsequent outcomes as a means of describing and explaining change for the purposes of the research rather than in dialogue with research participants. It was anticipated that different theories of change would emerge from different groups and individuals, based on their varying perspectives and experiences, providing different accounts of resident participation and impact on public services. Detailed data on these varying theories would have provided an interesting insight into how change was viewed and interpreted by different groups. However, this was not the main purpose of the study; the data collected was used instead to build a theory of change from the perspective of the researcher in order to understand the processes and outcomes of participation. This approach therefore used a critical realist perspective, discussed in the following section, where the views of various groups and individuals about change were taken into account, in order to build a comprehensive account of changes that had occurred in the case study area, but were analysed and interpreted by the researcher to produce a single account of change. This account would then contribute to the theory-building aim of the study.

The use of a ‘theory of change’ to inform research in this way therefore represents a departure from its standard use. In addition, the theory of change model was used to

explore only one aspect of a programme, participation, rather than the whole complexity of a programme (Barnes et al., 2003a). Community 'engagement' is part of the theory of change of NDC (Lawless, 2004), meaning it is one of the processes by which the programme should bring about change in the local areas where NDC programmes operate.

The purpose of this study was to explore how residents might influence public services, expanding governance network perspectives with respect to accounting for change in terms of the role of brokers and network ties, particularly strong ties, in this process. This thesis adopts a theory-building approach, empirically investigating how processes and outcomes of resident participation occurred through brokers and ties and thereby building a more detailed governance network theory which is better able to account for change. The theory of change framework was employed for this theory-building purpose.

There are some limitations with the theory of change model, however. This theoretical approach implies a linear process of change which may not be true of the intervention (Mackenzie and Blamey, 2005), since participatory processes may be unpredictable for example. Identifying outcomes may also be difficult if residents have aspirations for changes which are hard to measure, such as a better relationship with public services. Additionally, participants may not all have the same theory of change, especially in regeneration programmes where actors are drawn from diverse institutional or community backgrounds and have different aims. Different participants in a programme will have different ideas how change might occur, different information about the programme and may interpret terms in use such as 'partnership' differently (Barnes et al., 2003a). Furthermore, some accounts of change in neighbourhoods may focus on endogenous factors such as social capital or on wider regional or national socio-economic factors (Lupton and Power, 2004) which may be beyond the scope of the research. Theories of change may also alter over the lifetime of an intervention as priorities change (Schedler and Glastra, 2001; Mackenzie and Blamey, 2005). Various causes of change may be plausible and attribution of change factors will depend on the interpretation of the researcher or others (Mackenzie and Blamey, 2005). These challenges are partly overcome by the approach taken here of not collecting and attempting to reconcile many theories of change of different research subjects but of

using a theory of change framework to structure data collection and analysis, to support the theory-building aspect of the research.

4.3.2 Summary

Researching regeneration programmes with respect to the outcomes of resident participation on public services is methodologically challenging and existing approaches tend not to link processes and outcomes. This section has discussed a theory of change approach, used as a conceptual framework, which treats processes and outcomes as a whole and can be used to underpin research on participation outcomes in complex initiatives such as regeneration programmes.

4.4 Methodology

For this study, a methodological approach designed to uncover how the processes of participation operate in a complex governing arrangement was required, in order to open up the ‘black box’ of processes of local resident participation and to link these processes to outcomes. This study adopted a critical realist stance, an accommodation between constructivism and positivism which attempts to describe the objective world while accommodating the different perspectives of various actors. This perspective holds that while something may have an independent existence it is perceived imperfectly by observers (Benton and Craib, 1996). This stance is based on an ontological and epistemological assumption that there the world is an external, objective reality from which data can be collected, albeit in limited way (complete or perfect understanding of a phenomenon is not possible) while also recognising the unique ways in which actors construct their social worlds. Thus, different actor perspectives were included, among other data sources, which the research attempted to represent; this can be termed ‘intersubjectivity’ (Morgan, 2007). One can also expand beyond collecting subjective accounts by attempting to explore why individuals have certain perspectives (Gillham, 2000) in a particular context. Actor perspectives were therefore included in a phenomenological sense, in that their understandings of the social world were included as data but in a wider context of other descriptions. The aim of the study was to explore participation outcomes in governance networks, but to understand participation

dynamics fully the perspectives of different actors from varying institutional backgrounds had to be taken into account; a critical realist perspective was therefore appropriate.

A detailed study was required in order to examine processes of participation within a governing context. A case study was therefore conducted, taking an ethnographic approach in order to address cultural aspects of participation processes. This section discusses various aspects of the methods used.

4.4.1 Case Study Approach

Studies which involve complex processes and in which context is a critical factor lend themselves to the case study approach (Gillham, 2000). While secondary survey data were used, the research was primarily a qualitative case study of a governance network since the main challenge was to collect detailed data about complex pathways:

...the substantive instrumental benefits of greater legitimacy and better decision making are more amenable to case study designs, perhaps longitudinal, in which complex relationships can be explored intensively using mainly qualitative methods.

(Burton et al., 2006: 32)

Case study approaches differ in style from more ‘scientific approaches’ in that they do not incorporate experimental methods or using sampling to ensure generalisability; however, close observation is necessary in order to understand processes and mechanisms in operation in a social intervention (Gillham, 2000) and can also be defended as a scientific approach as close examination can sometimes be the optimum way to understand a phenomenon (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). All of these features could also said to be true of ethnographic research (discussed below).

Case studies can be exploratory, explanatory or descriptive (Yin, 2003). The case study here was an explanatory one since it attempted to explain how residents influenced services. Yin (2003) provides a description of instances where a case study research is appropriate where:

... a “how” or “why” question is being asked about a contemporary set of events, over which the investigator has little or no control.
(Yin, 2003: 9)

Case study research is also holistic and naturalistic - researching a subject fully, in context and in a natural setting - rather than being a study defined by the fact it has only collected data from one site (Verschuren, 2003). The case study for this research was a ‘single’ and an ‘ideal’ case study. A single case was adequate for the scope of the research since enough data could be collected from a single case, given the variety of different and in-depth data that was collected. There was no rationale for adding other cases, there was no comparative element for example, and multiple cases would have generated too much data for the scope of the study. The case was ‘ideal’ in the sense that it was a study of where participation had been implemented well, as one of the objectives was to explore outcomes which would require at least partially successful participatory practices. Many programmes were not appropriate sites for exploring resident influence as there had been insufficient participation in the design or implementation, and hence there were too few opportunities for influence to occur. The study therefore explored how residents might influence public services in a somewhat ideal context rather than a typical case.

The generalisability of the findings of the study was limited since it was a case study of a non-typical area. However, it could be said that although in some respects case study findings cannot be generalised, because it is thorough and in-depth the case study can highlight more universal social processes (Gillham, 2000). Case studies can also be generalised in the sense that they generate theory: they are theory-building types of research in the sense that they produce local findings which could be explored and tested in further areas, which could then be generalised to form a theory (Gillham, 2000; Yin, 2003). This is relevant to this study since it has used a ‘theory of change’ framework to explore participation processes and outcomes in a governance network context and aimed to generate findings from one case which could be applied and tested in other areas to establish whether, for example, some types of network processes are more universal.

4.4.2 Mixed Methods

This study also used a mixed method approach, which can be defined as:

...research in which the investigator collects and analyzes data, integrates the findings, and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study or program of inquiry.

(Tashakkori and Creswell, 2007: 4)

Burton et al. (2004) argue for mixed methods in participation research in order to improve the robustness of research designs. Using multiple methods together can produce a more robust analysis by testing out theories in various ways (Axinn and Pearce, 2006): a mixed method approach enabled data to be triangulated, for robustness, and was also appropriate for a critical realist approach as it enabled data to be collected on subjects' perspectives. A realist approach was useful in exploring change, but taking research participants' perspectives into account was also necessary for researching actors in networks who were located in different institutional contexts.

Mixed methods are common in case studies (Gillham, 2000) and can be adopted for various rationales (Mason, 2006). They reflect a pragmatist approach (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2005; Morgan, 2007), appropriate for researching a complex programme with unpredictable processes of participation requiring a flexibility of approach (Burton et al., 2006). They were used here largely for complementarity (Brannen, 2005), using several methods allowed the research to capture the breadth and complexity of processes occurring. Mixed methods were therefore used to expand the amount of data available for different aspects of the case study. Different kinds of data were used to build up a complete picture: for example, qualitative data provided information about those involved in the regeneration programme but surveys of the local area provided data about attitudes of non-involved residents. Mixed methods can also reveal more of a complexity of the empirical world (Moran-Ellis et al., 2006) and contribute to different parts of a theory of change. Mixed methods were also used for triangulation which is one of the most common ways of using mixed methods (Bryman, 2006). Using mixed methods enabled data to be triangulated, especially between different accounts of participation processes from different interest groups. Mixed methods are more time consuming (Waysman and Savaya, 1997) however and can be somewhat unpredictable

since combining data may produce unexpected results or outcomes which affect how the research proceeds (Bryman, 2006).

For this study, methods were integrated at the end of the research process (Brannen, 2005; Moran-Ellis et al., 2006), where different methods and findings were allowed to speak to each other at the analysis stage to produce a 'negotiated' account (Bryman, 2007). Meaning was drawn from the interpretations of the data; data which was conceptualised as existing on a continuum rather than being fundamentally different (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2005). Since mixed methods were used for the purposes of complementarity and triangulation, the utility of having different methods was firstly to comment on different aspects of the case study and secondly to compare with each other at the end of the fieldwork. This was the 'logic of integration' which informed how the data were judged (Mason, 2006).

4.4.3 Ethnographic Approach

The overall methodology which was adopted was broadly ethnographic, although not in terms of being a strict ethnography using participant observation and life histories as are typical in ethnographies (Fetterman, 1998). However, an ethnographic approach was used in the sense that it was an in-depth qualitative study in a particular geographical area, paying special attention to local contexts, cultures and practices, and was therefore appropriate for a case study of a governance network which involved complex processes.

Ethnographic approaches share much with mixed method case studies but brought an additional sensitivity to small, local processes and cultural nuances which were important in exploring a local governance network where relationships in a particular cultural context were significant. Ethnography tends to take a 'bottom up' approach to theory building, developing and building hypotheses (Agar, 1980). An ethnographic approach to public policy can contribute to an understanding of the complexity of policies and their outcomes (Wedel and Feldman, 2005), such as employing qualitative methods to research informal relations in participation and its effects (Tunstall, 2001). Ethnography is attuned to describing the culture of a group, how that group perceives the world (Fetterman, 1998) and also to addressing complexity:

... ethnographic research can offer more nuanced and fine-grained accounts of contestation, opening up ambivalences and uncertainties around what is 'really' at stake, the flow of events and what the eventual outcomes may be.

(Newman and Clarke, 2009: 82)

Ethnography can be tentative, needing time to familiarize with a site, build up a knowledge of the area, start to develop ideas or theories and so develops over time (Fetterman, 1998), developing questions and testing assumptions (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1996). For example, the observation component of ethnography is useful for gathering data in a 'naturalistic' setting with less disturbance from the researcher, though this is only true up to a point (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1996) since the researcher may influence the data to some degree; ethnographic approaches can adopt a more reflexive form of realism rather than claiming scientific realism (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1996). The longevity of the researcher's time in the field increases the validity of the data by enabling the capture of naturalistic data:

Progressive entry aims to minimize the potential threat posed by the researcher and to maintain a sustained presence in the setting. In field research, continued presence in the setting is important because it helps to undermine the maintenance of fronts. Considerable effort is usually needed to sustain fronts over an extended period. After a time, those in the setting may forget the researcher's presence or find the effort of maintaining the front too onerous.

(Lee, 1993: 135)

An ethnographic approach is necessary in order to explore actor's understandings and actions in the context of their traditions, for example (Bevir and Richards, 2009a); this was necessary for exploring varying actor perspectives in the governance network who came from different organisational and community backgrounds. Ethnography also tends to take a phenomenological perspective in order to understand the perceptions of actors (Fetterman, 1998). The approach taken here follows Hammersley and Atkinson (1996) who adopt a perspective somewhere between a positivistic and a constructionist approach. While being attuned to subjects' perspectives, ethnographic accounts are also realist to an extent and provide one interpretation of an area which may differ from participants' (Fetterman, 1998). Ethnography is coherent with a critical realist perspective in that it combines local understandings with an outsider's perspective:

Most ethnographers start collecting data from the emic perspective and then try to make sense of what they have collected in terms of both the native's view and their own scientific analysis. Just as thorough fieldwork requires and insightful and sensitive cultural interpretations combined with rigorous data collection techniques, good ethnography requires both emic and etic perspectives.

(Fetterman, 1998: 22)

Mixed methods share much in common with ethnographic methodologies since they both concentrate in-depth on a limited area or case, use a variety of methods to collect data and often use triangulation to test data and develop a hypothesis (Fetterman, 1998). However, ethnographic-type approaches had additional benefits to a mixed-methods approach: because the research was attempting to understand complex processes where contextual factors are also important, it was necessary to take an approach to data collection which was sensitive to the broader context of the social world in which these processes took place but was also able to collect data about small, informal, relational aspects of the programme which were important in explaining processes and outcomes. This revealed more than focusing on the more technocratic aspects of policy delivery and highlighted aspects of public policy which are often missed in evaluations of programmes, particularly the day-to-day realities of ordinary people who are affected by them. This emic perspective has traditionally been at the heart of ethnography (Fetterman, 1998).

The study took an ethnographic approach to data collection but did not produce a traditional ethnography in terms of presenting a thick description of individuals and the local area, in that data were presented primarily in order to reveal the network and how it functioned. While this meant that some of the richness of descriptions of the individuals and local area, traditional to ethnography, were lost it enabled a more concentrated focus on describing the governance network of the case study. The aim of the study was to reveal how the governance network was formed and how it functioned with respect to resident participation, highlighting types of roles and relationships which occurred and which might be applicable to other governance networks. More detailed descriptions of individuals and places were not necessary for this application of an ethnographic approach; data which did not directly contribute to this 'ethnography of a network' were not included for this reason, as well as reasons of space and the ethical stance of the research to protect individual confidentiality (discussed below). The study

also concentrated on the network of relations between residents and the public sector, as covering wider networks in the area in any detail was beyond the scope of the study. Therefore the social networks in the community between residents which may have had an impact on how residents became involved in governing were not focused on. Similarly, networks between individuals in the public sector, such as between employees of different public services, were not addressed in detail.

Ethnography is not traditionally used in programme evaluations but has much to contribute to understanding policy implementation and effect because it addresses the detail of processes and takes different perspectives into account. Ethnographic approaches are more time-intensive and therefore expensive but have methodological and practical benefits. For example, the length of ethnographies may be useful when researching socially-excluded groups who may need time to build trust with the research process. Carrying out lengthy observation work provided an opportunity to engage with people informally and meant that research participants were familiar with the researcher before interviewing took place. This had benefits in the sampling of research participants for this study because it enabled access to greater numbers of interviewees.

4.4.4 Methods

Methods were carried out in various stages, from January 2007 to January 2008, summarised in Table 4.1 below. The initial method was to carry out document analysis, to understand how the programme operated, the context of the programme and what data had already been collected. Particular attention was paid to how participation was promoted, how services had responded to residents and participation initiatives, and how brokers such as the regeneration programme and voluntary organisations had supported residents. This was necessary to inform subsequent interviews and other data collection, in order to avoid replicating data collection efforts and to avoid an unnecessary research burden on participants. Secondary survey data for the area for attitudes to participation and public services was also collected, and data relating to resident participation was extracted.

Table 4.1 Methods Used

Method	Data Collection	Analysis
Documentary analysis	Programme and local authority documents, including meeting minutes and reports, from programme inception in 1999 to 2007	Documents reviewed for participatory policies and practice, and data on quality of services, including change over time
Observation of meetings	30 local meetings in the NDC network, the majority with public services, NDC officers and residents all attending. Observation included recording of resident aspirations and responses from services.	Qualitative data coded using NVivo. Data on resident aspirations and services responses analysed quantitatively using table to summarise frequency.
Observation of street staff on patrol	Observation of four patrols in local area, with wardens and SEMs.	Data coded using NVivo
Interviews	Interviews with 40 individuals, all but two fully transcribed. NDC officers, local government/council employees, public service staff at different levels and local active residents were interviewed.	Data coded using NVivo
Interviews with non-engaged residents	9 interviews with local residents not participating in the NDC network, recruited in local cafes. Abandoned after very little data emerged.	Resident aspirations noted, but no further analysis as little data collected
Analysis of secondary survey data	Data from six local surveys, three conducted by Kwest Consultants and three by Mori collected, as well as two small surveys conducted by NDC	Variables on resident participation and service improvement analysed using SPSS

Meeting observations were also carried out from early in the fieldwork, in order to collect data from as many meetings as possible during the fieldwork period. Observations focused on the culture and practices of meeting environments, issues and aspirations of residents, the reactions of services, the role of brokers in mediating between residents and public services, and any records of outcomes. In total, thirty local meetings were observed. Observation was an important component of the methods because it provided some triangulation of data against interview accounts of participation processes and the overall relationship between services and residents in meetings. Observation enabled additional data to be gathered, including general contextual information, unexpected data and data that were not formally recorded in

minutes or programme documents. It had the added benefit of identifying likely interviewees, and enabled familiarisation of the researcher within the local setting. Attendance of the researcher at meetings was commented on a few times as a sign of commitment to and interest in the area.

The next stage involved carrying out semi-structured interviews (see research instruments in Appendix I for interview schedule). Different groups of stakeholders were involved in the research: programme staff, active residents, NDC officers, ground and manager level public service employees working for environmental services (the Operations and Leisure Departments of the local authority), voluntary sector representatives and non-involved residents. A total of forty people were interviewed. Most of the NDC officers involved in resident participation were interviewed, as well as those with overall responsibility at a senior level, and the officer responsible for environmental programmes. Almost all of the residents who were active in NDC were interviewed. All interviews were tape-recorded and fully transcribed with the exception of two which were opportunistic interviews with senior staff where notes were taken instead.

NDC officers acted as gatekeepers in the initial stages of the research and suggested residents to contact for interviewing. After several meetings were observed however, direct contact with active residents was established. Interviews were also conducted with nine non-involved residents but they produced very little data, as their awareness of events and changes in the local area was minimal, and these were halted. Staff to be interviewed in environmental services and the local authority were identified through contacts at the NDC programme. Interviews were semi-structured, leaving flexibility to follow research participants' lines of thought on how they thought services had changed.

Interview and observation data were coded, using NVIVO, after which codes relating to processes of change and outcomes were identified and groups into themes. Data on resident aspirations and how NDC officers or public services had responded to them was analysed using tables: aspirations were grouped by thematic area (such as the local environment) and the types of responses were categorised and counted. Survey data, on resident influence, was analysed using SPSS. Visual data was also collected in the form of photographs of the area, in order to record physical changes in the local environment

and to provide data on the context of housing development taking place in the area (see Appendices III and IV).

A report of initial findings was presented to NDC officers after the end of the fieldwork and they were given an opportunity to comment. This was useful as they had suggestions and reflections on why some of the outcomes had occurred. Together, these different methods provided data on different aspects of and stages of the programme, in order to provide a comprehensive account of participation processes and outcomes within the case study area.

4.4.5 Summary

The complex nature of governance networks and the unpredictable processes of participation being studied indicated a methodological approach which would capture the detail of processes and subsequent outcomes. Methods were also required which would account for these processes within their institutional and wider context. This indicated an in-depth approach; this section has outlined the overall methodological approach taken and the ethnographic case study method used in order to address the methodological requirements for the study.

4.5 Case Study

This section describes the case study site that was selected, some of the practical issues which arose during the research and the research ethics of the study.

4.5.1 Case Study Site Selection

The New Deal for Communities programme was identified as the best national regeneration programme to research since it has been running the longest, therefore having enough time to implement participatory practices and experience an impact from this, and also had community engagement built into its core principles. The national evaluation also conducted regular resident surveys which would provide the study with data for triangulation. NDC had better data than other ABIs because of the Mori surveys

and administrative data collected from schools, DWP, house prices and crime statistical sources (Lawless, 2007).

The case study site selected was the East Manchester NDC programme (also known as 'Beacons for a Brighter Future'), including connected organisations which had an impact on resident influence in the local area. The case study site was selected by attempting to identify an 'ideal' case. Because the aim of this study was to explain how local residents influenced services, and there was existing evidence which demonstrates that this does not always occur, the case study site had to be one where these processes were likely to be occurring. Identification of a programme and an external environment which were supportive towards local resident participation and influence was therefore necessary. However, locating an area with 'good' community participation was challenging as it is difficult to identify good practice in the absence of research data on participation outcomes. A review from the national evaluation of NDC programmes was examined to identify which programmes might have been implementing participatory approaches successfully. The review contained fairly short summaries of each programme, with around seven or eight indicating that the programme had implemented participation well. Reporting on the East Manchester NDC stated:

This is a very robust and well managed Partnership marked by particularly effective engagement with the local community. The structures of the Partnership encourage strong resident representation and avenues for community input.
(CRESR, 2003: 27)

This programme also had no record of major problems, in stability of management staff for example, which some other NDC programmes had had and which had resulted in problems for programme implementation. Lastly, East Manchester NDC's website was explored to gauge the quantity of references to community participation and general impression of commitment to this principle, and it compared favourably to other programme websites. East Manchester NDC Programme was also selected as the case study site because Manchester City Council (MCC) was a 'Civic Pioneer' local authority. Civic Pioneers was an initiative where local authorities made a commitment to involving local residents in decision making (Gaffney, 2005). MCC had reportedly focused particularly on changing the cultures and working practices of statutory services, which was a very relevant issue in this study.

Environmental services were selected a sub-case study, as the entire public service sector in the locality would have been too large for the study. Environmental services were selected as these were less influenced by national policy (compared to policing for example) and therefore provided more scope for residents to influence local policy and services. It was also a community-wide service and resource that everybody used and would be likely to have an opinion about.

4.5.2 Negotiating Entry

East Manchester NDC programme was initially contacted through their lead research officer, and access was negotiated through the research team and a programme officer initially, after which they negotiated approval from the chief executive. Several issues emerged during this process. Firstly, staff wanted the programme to benefit from allowing research access, as accommodating a researcher entailed costs in terms of time commitments from staff and other people involved in the programme. It was agreed that the programme would be provided with a summary version of the research findings. The programme staff were interested in participation research because it had been a significant aspect of their work and they were also drawing near to the end of the programme and were focused on the issue of how statutory services might be affected by their activities as a legacy of their work. Since the interests of the research and the programme closely coincided, the provision of the research findings was a sufficient incentive to allow research access.

Additionally, East Manchester and the New Deal for Communities programme in particular, has attracted the interest of several academics during the life of the programme, several of whom maintained contact or who were currently working with them in various ways. The programme staff regarded relationships with academics as helpful, since they valued their research findings. This experience with researchers meant that programme staff had been very aware of how researchers operate and what they might need from the programme; this facilitated access and the initial setting up of the research. For example, the research staff provided a desk and a computer within the programme offices, to be used as a base for the research. This enabled easy access to programme documentation, and also facilitated familiarisation with how the programme operates, who various staff were, what the culture of the programme was, and so on. It

also facilitated the interviewing of programme staff. The risks involved were an over-identification with the programme. It was necessary, therefore, to remain aware of the importance of maintaining a critical distance from research subjects (Lee, 1993).

4.5.3 Research Ethics

The study followed the Social Research Association's Ethical Guidelines, which NDC officers were informed about when agreeing to the study. However, these guidelines make little mention of ethics in terms of personal attitudes or respect for research participants; in ethnographic research this is a much more relevant issue than following certain procedures as the researcher spends considerable amounts of time with research subjects, in formal and informal settings. Particular issues around researching residents living in deprived areas were also taken into account. Participants in deprived areas, particularly where high-profile programmes are operating, may receive continual requests to give up their free time to contribute to research projects. There was a danger of research overload, plus a wider ethical consideration of the study identifying the area and its residents in terms of deficits or 'otherness'. This was countered by an attempt to be sensitive and reflexive during the research process, and by examining existing data on the programme before conducting primary data collection. Local residents may also be buffered by programme staff who act as gatekeepers: access to groups was mediated by one of the staff at the programme who was able to make initial contact and also suggest what sorts of activities and lengths of time participants would be willing to give to the research process. A discussion with one of the NDC programme officers was held about offering local residents payment for their time in taking part in interviews; this was rejected as this issue had occurred earlier in the programme and residents had rejected payment in order to preserve their reputations of impartiality in the programme. It was felt by the officer that bringing this issue up again with residents would cause offense, so no payment was offered to resident interviewees.

4.5.3.1 Case Studies and Ethics

Two significant ethical considerations were pertinent to the case study aspect of the research. Firstly, since the research was based in a programme and some of the research had an evaluative element, an agreement was reached with the programme officers to

provide a report of research findings in exchange for access to the site. This agreement had an ethical component, not just a practical one, as research always represents something of an intrusion, mainly in terms of time donated for interviews, and the provision of research findings compensated for this to an extent.

The second ethical issue for the research insofar as it was a case study was anonymity. Because the research was detailed and specifics of the area were important to the story of what happened in the programme, the anonymity of the case study site was not possible. East Manchester NDC officers were relatively comfortable with this since they were used to research being carried out and published on their area, were seen as a successful NDC and were happy with their public profile.

Anonymity for interviewees and attendees of public meetings was a more difficult issue. Confidentiality of data provided in interviews was discussed at the beginning of interviews. Interviewees were told that in the writing up individuals would not be identified next to opinions cited or quotes used. Because East Manchester NDC had a long history of open debate in meetings, interviewees were unconcerned about being cited, often saying that everybody knew what their opinion was anyway and they did not care who knew it. If interviewees made comments such as these, they were subsequently told before the interview started that if there were any issues brought up that were particularly sensitive they should make this clear in the interview and particular care would be taken when using that data, which two or three interviewees did. Identifying information such as personal history, family details or pastimes was not used in quotes since these would enable identification of a person in a small case study area.

When data was presented in the writing up, speech patterns and phrases which would enable someone to identify the interviewee became a problem, especially in longer quotes. In a case study area where a relatively small group of people have known each other for a long time, it becomes easy to identify who has said something even if identifying information has been removed. This was often due to speech patterns, grammatical style or verbal mannerisms used, as these were distinctive to individuals. For examples, some interviewees would use 'really', 'sort of' or other expressions in particular parts of sentences which made it easy to 'hear' who the person was when reading a quote, even if the reader was not trying to work out who the interviewee was.

Superfluous phrases and words were therefore removed from quotations where this would not change the interviewee's tone and meaning, and where they would enable possible identification if they had remained. Even after this was done, a small amount of data was not useable because the events described, views expressed or the way they were expressed made them too easily attributable to an individual.

4.5.3.2 *Ethnography and Ethics*

One area of difficulty with ethics using an ethnographic approach is that it is generally not well understood by research participants, particularly its universal scope in collecting data. Most people understood 'research' as being about surveys or interviews. There was a tension sometimes in the ethics of collecting data outside of formal research activities such as interviews because of the issues about informed consent. The programme made provision for a desk and computer in the research department, which provided a base for the fieldwork but also a more in-depth understanding of how the programme operated, the culture of the initiative, how people interacted and so on. There were ethical boundaries to be observed however, since people walking through the building would be unlikely to be aware they were participating in research just by being observed. For example, various interactions were witnessed where residents came in through the front door and spoke to NDC officers about problems they were having. This example was not sensitive or controversial, and reiterated other data collected about interactions between residents and NDC officers and was used as general information (no specific incidents were referred to in the writing up). However, there were one or two incidents, such as an overheard discussion about a sensitive issue, which were not used because of the compromise it would entail to the research ethics of the study.

4.5.4 Summary

This section has discussed the practical and ethical issues encountered when setting up and conducting the research at East Manchester NDC. The programme was a relatively easy research site, largely because they were used to having researchers visit. Ethical issues rose largely because of anonymity being difficult in a case study site where participants knew each other well.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the overall methodological approach and specific methods, which can be summarised as a mixed methods case study using an ethnographic approach. The analytic approach can be summarised as critical realist, and as adopting a modified theory of change framework. A pragmatic mixed methods approach enabled the study to collect data relevant to different aspects of participation processes and their context, to triangulate data and to use appropriate methods for the fieldwork site which were acceptable to the research participants. The ethnography was conducted over a period of a year in a site familiar with researchers, where extra caution was taken with anonymity. This methodological approach enabled a detailed study of governance network processes and outcomes to be carried out.

PART TWO

5 Findings: Structure and Institutional Dynamics of the NDC Network

5.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the case study NDC programme and aspects of its governing dynamics. Two objectives of the study were to assess the participation dynamics of a regeneration programme, with respect to metagovernance arrangements, cultural factors and also the strategic engagement of actors. This chapter addresses these objectives by describing the NDC programme in its context as well as structural and institutional features which created governing dynamics, and also how actors engaged in this context⁷.

The NDC programme was located in a local governance context; these are referred to together as the ‘NDC network’. The NDC programme had a board with various associated subgroups where different stakeholders attended, but these stakeholders and NDC staff also attended other local meetings organised by the local authority or by local services. There was a significant overlap of attendees and meetings were often held in the NDC building; these additional meetings are therefore categorised as falling

⁷ Participants have been grouped into the following categories. Firstly, ‘active’ residents: those involved in NDC meetings and other local governance meetings. Secondly, public service employees: those involved in ground level work in the area. ‘Ground level employees’ refers to those working in public services at the lowest level, who usually had the most public-facing roles. Thirdly, public service managers: those who managed small groups in the area, or were responsible for a service in a particular section of the City. Fourthly, NDC officers. Lastly a small number of interviewees worked for the council or for the Regional Government Office for the North West were grouped together to preserve anonymity. Meetings were classified into NDC meetings, run by NDC officers as part of the programme, such as the NDC board, or ‘local meetings’ which were run by public services or the city council for the purposes of determining services in the area. The names of some local meetings, services or areas have been removed to preserve anonymity.

within the ‘NDC network’ in East Manchester even though they were not strictly NDC meetings.

Two points should be noted about the case study findings. Firstly, governing in the case study NDC partnership was focused on local level issues, since urban regeneration programmes operate in small areas or ‘neighbourhoods’ and in this case study area the programme had focused its efforts on the local area rather than building links to wider strategic levels above it. It should be noted that governing at this very local level, therefore, looks different to what is typically referred to as governing of central government in that it concerns smaller, lower-level decisions, for example how well a local park is maintained rather than green space policy for a city or region. This is, nevertheless, governing albeit at the micro level; decisions were made about public policy at different levels, and those which directly affected residents, through bin collection for example, were no less significant than waste policy at a city or national level for some people. Secondly, it should be noted that the findings presented here are based on governing environment and processes at a particular stage of the NDC programme, seven years into a ten year initiative, rather than a fixed representation of a static governance network.

5.2 Context of the Programme

This section describes the local context of the East Manchester NDC programme. The history of the area and deprivation formed an important context for local resident engagement. Various initiatives operating in the area also formed part of the local governance context for NDC, as participatory policies affected how local public bodies responded to local residents.

5.2.1 Decline and Regeneration

East Manchester NDC, also known as ‘Beacons for a Brighter Future’, was one of the 17 NDC pathfinder programmes launched nationally in 1999. The remaining 22 NDC programmes were launched the following year. At the beginning of the programme period, Manchester was the third most deprived area in the UK, and the East

Manchester NDC area was within the 10th most deprived wards in Britain (Anttila et al., 2005). East Manchester's NDC was allocated £51,725,000 over the 10 year period, to March 2010. The East Manchester NDC area covered two areas of Beswick and Openshaw, largely falling within the Bradford electoral ward of Manchester but also covering part of a neighbouring ward, though ward boundaries and names changed in 2004 (see Appendix II). The population was largely white, with small numbers of black and Chinese residents, and increasing migration from Eastern Europe. This population had a mixture of long term residents and transient groups, with a high turnover in social housing.

There had been a thirty year period of industrial decline in the area prior to the beginning of NDC, with areas of derelict land at former manufacturing sites (see Appendix IV). There had also consequently been a significant population decline, with low demand for housing in the area. There was a history of initiatives in the area, with housing clearance and rebuilding projects going back to the 1960s but residents had felt their area had been neglected by more recent regeneration efforts until NDC was announced. Housing was a major part of the NDC programme: almost half of the NDC funds (£24m) were used to buy out social housing stock from the City Council in 2003/2004 and create Eastland Homes, a new housing association with a tenant majority on its board. Housing redevelopment had a major impact on the physical landscape of the area (see Appendix IV), including environmental improvements since parks and road layouts were affected.

5.2.2 Local Programmes

By the time NDC was introduced in 1999 there were other local initiatives operating in the area, including the construction of sports venues for the 2002 Commonwealth Games. Other initiatives included Health, Education and Sports Action Zones, and Sure Start. Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) funding from rounds 4 and 5 was received for the neighbouring Clayton area and the two funds were administered together under the 'Beacons for a Brighter Future' programme, totalling £75m. A Housing Market Renewal (HMR) programme began in 2003 and was co-located with NDC, although funded separately. New East Manchester (NEM), an Urban Regeneration Company (URC), was set up in 2000, was also operating in the area (and also in some

neighbouring areas to NDC) and eventually formed an umbrella organisation for NDC and HMR. URCs were set up by government to attract investment into deprived areas and to develop physical infrastructure. NEM's aim was to build 12,500 new houses in East Manchester and to increase the population, which had been falling, by 50%.

NDC was therefore part of a set of initiatives and regeneration efforts in East Manchester, although it was significant in terms of the size of its funding and in its community development and participation focus. Relationships between the initiatives were good, with extensive joint working. This generally had benefits for NDC except where resident anger or frustration with other programmes could, by association, also be directed at them. For example, NDC was co-located with HMR and worked with them on some community consultations. HMR was a relatively controversial programme as it involved placing compulsory purchase orders (CPO's) on private housing for redevelopment, as well as moving some people living in social housing from the local area which was felt by some residents to destroy community (described by one resident as "*the ethnic cleansing of the working class*"). Both HMR and NEM voiced support for participatory approaches but were substantially focused on physical infrastructure and private sector issues, and had been criticised at times for not listening to local residents:

They may see public consultation as, as a bit of an inconvenience because they're dealing with you know companies who want to relocate, and they don't see the relevance. And I think there's always been, having worked in a [community development setting], I can see that there's always been a bit of conflict between that understanding and, sort of, marrying the two approaches. And I think there's, there is a conflict as well between the New East Manchester ethos and the NDC ethos.

Interview, NDC Officer 3

While the East Manchester NDC programme operated within a context of cooperative programmes and initiatives in the local area, therefore, there were tensions at certain points.

5.2.3 Local Authority Structures

The local authority, Manchester City Council, had had various participatory and service improvement initiatives in place before and during the life of NDC. The council was part of a national Civic Pioneers scheme for local authorities committed to community participation, and had adopted a Public Service Agreement (LPSA2) target in order to try to increase the percentage of residents who felt they could influence decision making in the area. In addition, Manchester City Council had been a Best Value pilot authority, which promoted participation, from 1998 to 2001.

The Local Strategic Partnership was a city-wide structure which had the aim of coordinating services at a strategic level, with the local authority and local communities acting as partners. It had launched a Community Engagement Strategy in 2003 which promoted residents as *“empowered to engage in local decision making and influence service delivery”* (Manchester City Council, 2005a: 3). The Community Engagement Strategy included a toolkit with information and practical ideas for involvement for public services (Manchester City Council, 2005c). NDCs were generally not well linked to LSPs, partly because they were locally-focused programmes (Lawless, 2006b) and East Manchester NDC was no exception. One NDC officer summarised their relationship as *“We know they’re there and they know we’re here.”* In addition, the LSP was viewed by some local residents as being controlled by the city council, rather than being truly participatory.

In general, NDC was able to operate at arm’s length from the City Council because of its location in East Manchester rather than the Town Hall in the centre of Manchester, which entailed a geographical and operational separation. Manchester City Council in general tended to let local regeneration programmes operate relatively independently in any case, as long as they were being run well. East Manchester NDC therefore managed to operate at arm’s length from the local authority, despite being run by seconded local authority officers from the City Council, and this had benefits both in running the programme and in forming a relationship with local residents:

We weren’t having to be checking back with the authority all the time about what to do. We had the opportunities to try things out in how we were operating. ...So that was great doing that, not having to go back to the city “We’re thinking about

this idea”... and really early on there were residents that said “Thank God you’re not the council”. Of course we were, weren’t we? But we operated in a slightly different way.

Interview, NDC Officer 4

At the sub-local authority level, local Ward Coordination groups had been introduced by the local authority as part of Manchester’s neighbourhood management strategy. Their role was to mirror the LSP’s role but at a local level: focusing services on local area issues, encouraging joint working at very local level and enabling local residents to participate in decision making. Ward Coordination groups had annual plans and a small amount of funding from the local authority for small-scale projects. The meetings were held monthly in the NDC wards, and were attended by public services, residents and local councillors. The NDC programme was closely linked to Ward Coordination: ward meetings were chaired by Ward Coordinators who were local authority employees that had a two year post as a coordinator and also had another, main, local authority role. In the NDC area, the people coordinating the two groups also worked for East Manchester NDC or were based in the same building. Bradford ward meetings were often held in the NDC building.

At the local level, East Manchester NDC also had links with local groups which were linked with public services in the areas, such as the Friends of Parks groups through which residents volunteered, raised money for and advocated with public services for their local park. Local Action Partnership (LAP) groups also met in the area; these addressed crime problems in the area and were chaired by the police. Local tasking meetings were also held to coordinate services in the areas for crime and environmental problems.

5.2.4 Summary

East Manchester NDC began operating in an area which had experienced significant deprivation and decline over time, but in which various public programmes had been initiated and in a local authority context which had implemented participatory policies at the strategic and local level. East Manchester NDC had a close relationship with most of these programmes and initiatives. The close links within the local governance

structure was in contrast to the relatively removed relationship East Manchester NDC had with the local authority, despite staff being seconded from the authority. This separated the programme from strategic-level structures to a degree but also gave the programme a measure of operational freedom.

5.3 Trajectory of the NDC Programme

The NDC was an unstable network, though not atypical for a temporary intervention: NDC programmes nationally peaked in terms of change between 2002 and 2004 (Lawless, 2007). The programme had a particular shape, with particular energy at the beginning, a boom period in the middle and a winding down phase. Engagement patterns, spend, levels of activity, programme focus, attitudes, knowledge and so on changed due to the dynamic interplay of various factors across time.

East Manchester NDC frontloaded its spend and had, at the time of fieldwork in 2007, distributed 92% of its funds. The programme was advanced in terms of its implementation and spend for two reasons: firstly, the programme had established itself early as the original partnership was made up of an existing group of local authority personnel and residents (which had unsuccessfully applied for funds from another programme) and did not need a long lead-in time to develop; and East Manchester had not had management problems or turnover of staff at a senior level, a problem which affected some other NDCs severely (Coaffee and Deas, 2008). In addition, East Manchester NDC attempted to fund 'quick win' projects early on in order to win round local residents, a common strategy (Lawless, 2007).

Initial feelings amongst residents were a mix of cynicism about regeneration and the local authority together with positive feelings about funding being introduced to the local area. Feelings fluctuated over time however, depending on the stage of the programme:

*At first I think, when you first come they just, [one resident] just slammed the door in me face, sort of "****ing council, rrr". So, there's a lot of suspicion, they've heard it all before, you know there's all that kind of thing. And then they start to see things happen and so you're their best friend and you've overcome all that,*

and then there's partly a bit of "Oh they can just get on with it now cos I don't need to be involved in it any more because it's all just happening. I could just pop along and see them but I don't need to".

Interview, NDC Officer 2

There was this kind of rosy image that, communities were really going to be up for it and they really wanted to be involved and I think when you first get the money and there's that euphoria around it everybody's on board and everybody wants to be a part of it, and when the reality set, settles in of how long it's going to take and what the priorities are going to be people do back away from that and they do get a bit disillusioned with it.

Interview, NDC Officer 3

Funding peaked at around 2002-2004, and perceptions of the programme were high at this stage, falling between early cynicism and later disillusionment amongst some. A local survey conducted by Kwest consultants for the NDC programme found that between 1999 and 2002, the percentage of residents who thought their area was getting better rose from 17% to 52%. Mori survey findings in 2004 for the national evaluation revealed that 49% of respondents in East Manchester thought their area had slightly or greatly improved in the past two years compared to the average of all NDC areas of 37%.

NDC attracted services through its status as a new programme with high-profile support at the beginning, but this was unsustainable. The end of the programme brought about a different context for participation, as the energy levels of the programme and residents declined:

It's not as intense as it was. At the beginning there was for instance, they funded Party in the Park over there and then they had the stalls and things and they asked people questions. They did lots of consultation at the beginning. But as things have changed and some of the, as the projects have been, in a way you can say that at the beginning from being very, people being very hungry to get involved and wanting to see all this sort of thing happen, as things have happened they've got a bit blasé about it.

Interview, Resident 2

Change over time with such a programme was often seen as natural, including the decline in interest from public services once the excitement of a new initiative had worn off and there was less funding available:

I think there was genuinely a lot of engagement. A lot of, a lot of agencies were very interested. I mean, when I, again when I look back on the early days in the environment programme there were lots of different agencies involved, ... And those have reduced. Again I keep going back to the resources but the level of resources is not, there's no point in having lots of meetings for meetings sake if there's not the resources to do something with it... It was like everything, I mean, I think there was certainly a political shift, you know, not just from City Council but from lots of the different public agencies to concentrate on this area because there was recognition of the level of deprivation in all, you know health factors, teenage pregnancy, crime, poor environment. And so I think there was genuine commitment from all of the agencies at that time to really push and see what could be achieved. So I think, you know, there was an intensive time, that was unnatural. And I think that has levelled a little now as certain systems are in place or certain ways of working are in place.

Interview, NDC Officer 3

During the fieldwork year there was a concern about the impending end of NDC. NDC officers were concerned about falling attendance at NDC meetings by residents during the past year, and public services had also reduced their attendance. NDC's hopes were that the local resident and community groups it supported would continue without the assistance of NDC and that public services would be sufficiently re-oriented to be more responsive to local residents (East Manchester NDC, 2006b). As far as a legacy was concerned, East Manchester NDC had made a continual effort to establish resident participation in Ward Coordination and services (East Manchester NDC, 2004b), aiming to reorient public services from early in the programme, as the Delivery Plan noted:

Our vision is to recreate over ten years a neighbourhood with a distinct identity where conditions return to a normal level and where special intervention is no longer required. This will only be achieved through public agencies ensuring that residents of all age groups have access to better quality services which meet their

needs. All agencies have signed up to the requirement for change and ensuring that this happens and is effective will be a key objective of Beacons for a Brighter Future. NDC is more than a programme, it is also the mechanism for coordinating mainstream and project funding for the long-term benefit of the area.

(East Manchester NDC, 1999: 9)

At the time of the fieldwork, the programme had experienced a tailing off after its peak and had no specific mainstreaming or continuation plan, relying more on existing organisations and structures to carry on their approach. NEM was anticipated to remain in the area after NDC finished in 2010 and was seen as the likely successor for some of NDC's activities, albeit at a smaller scale.

5.4 NDC as Hybrid Governing

NDC was established by national government, which imposed various parameters in its organisation and scope, but also structured the programme to engage local stakeholders such as local services and local residents, and as such represented a hybrid mode of governing. This section explores both of these aspects of East Manchester NDC.

5.4.1 Metagovernance

The NDC programme was shaped through the provision of central government funding, attached performance monitoring and programme rules. The network management function of the local authority also influenced the programme: the local authority had a network management role through being the accountable body for programme finances, and projects over £1m had to be approved by the Government Office for the North West. The local authority was also indirectly involved in network management through many personnel at the programme being seconded by the local authority, which influenced processes such as staff management and recruitment. The Deputy Chief Executive of the local authority also chaired the Public Agencies Forum of East Manchester NDC which addressed strategic service issues. In practice, the national and local government levels of influence over the NDC programme operated together since the local authority was required by national government to administer some aspects of the programme.

One of the first ways residents encountered the role of national and local government in the design of the programme was the way in which the 'East Manchester' NDC area was artificially created, whereas local residents tended to identify with smaller local areas:

I mean one of the things with East Manchester, although it's branded as East Manchester, across the city and locally and nationally, there isn't an East Manchester. What you've actually got is Openshaw and Beswick and people are very, strangely enough it is very much pride in their local area.

Interview, Voluntary Sector Representative 4

Respondent: And that was one thing that we were, drummed into us, it's not about you it's about everywhere else. And even on me own estate they used to say...

Interviewer: Who, who used to say that?

Respondent: Well, that was the ethos of Beacons really. You've got to think East Manchester wide, you've got think Beswick, Openshaw and Clayton, not about my bit. You have to look at everybody's bit if you're doing a project.

Interview, Resident 1

Efforts had been made early on in the NDC programme to bring the catchment areas of Beswick, Openshaw and Clayton together, since residents from each of these areas did not mix. By the fieldwork year (seven years into the programme), relations between areas were good although residents still identified themselves and their problems by local area.

NDC's purpose was to reduce social exclusion in deprived areas, and programmes were required to meet targets in NDC's thematic areas of: education, health, economy, crime, and housing and the physical environment. Residents did not have an opportunity to shape the main programme themes, although they were uncontroversial since they were so broad. Residents, NDC and services tended to agree on the broad goals in the area but differences would emerge about the best way to achieve them. The NDC programme was not designed to give residents total control over local services, but was a 'partnership'. Resident participation was treated as being part of a decision making process which also involved professional judgements, rather than being completely resident led:

It's this issue about somehow if you go to the people who need the services they can also design the services, decide how to spend the money. And I think this is the worst sort of patronizing approach actually. Yes people know that they need services, yes people want a fair deal. They actually want a proper partnership with the professionals, and they want professionals, whether that be the local authority, the health service, the police, to do their job! ...So you've got residents with 50% of the board, deciding how to spend 80 million quid. But all of it always based on good sound advice coming through from people who know what they're doing. And it just seems common sense to me.

Interview, Council/Regional Government Officer 2

East Manchester NDC adopted a position between community-led and local authority led regeneration, seeking a compromise in a balance between the two (Fordham et al., 2010) and experienced tensions because of this:

You might argue that it's a council dominated initiative cos we're all working for the council and have worked for the council for years but, I think, I would hope is that both residents see that there's a difference between the council and NDC whilst, blurs at the edges, but there's a difference in approach between the two and I think one of the biggest compliments that we can be made is that people don't see us as part of the council quite often. But equally as our fellow partners, whilst we have to work on, we have to recognize we're ultimately we're employed by the council and therefore representative of the council. Again, they don't see it as a council dominated and council run initiative they see it as a partnership. And I just think it's a difficult thing to get right.... I don't think we can afford to turn native or, there are times when we will be self critical of the council if we need to be but equally we can't afford to bite the hand that feeds you.

Interview, NDC Officer 1

Residents came to the realisation that decisions had to go through a process which included input from NDC and public services, as well as approval from the city council which had financial oversight. The result was that some of their aspirations were excluded from discussion with public services because they were not deemed realistic by public sector agencies. The limitations on resident aspirations were most clearly demonstrated through the desire of residents for capital projects which were more or

less 'off limits' for resident aspirations since public services did not have capacity for this. New Deal did fund some initiatives but targeted funding towards parks, a small number of community centres and a new secondary school for the area. The limitations to resident aspirations for capital projects were most explicitly demonstrated in the aspiration of local residents for a local swimming pool, where NDC officers attempted to dissuade residents from this aspiration:

I was very gobby at the beginning because I wanted people to listen. But then I took the structured, and I can say like for instance I used to say "Why can't we have a swimming pool in this area?" Do you know what I mean? "This is what's needed, blah blah blah" And [NDC Officer] said "[name] you can't have a swimming pool and this is because it's too much to run, people don't use it, it then becomes a debt". "Oh, oh right". I understood then. He sat down, explained it to me.

Interview, Resident 11

I think almost it's about educating people about what they should be expecting rather than just demand what they think is their right.... I think it's in terms of people think that's what they want and when they got it they realise that's not really what I want at all. They used to have swimming pools, they lost their swimming pools therefore we demand our swimming pools back even though nobody used them.

Interview, NDC Officer 1

In 1999, residents expressed aspirations for a pool and some interviewees in 2007 also expressed a wish for a local pool. A new pool was not thought necessary by the City Council or NDC since the local pool had had low rates of use, was running at a loss and there were other pools in nearby areas. The NDC area had lower rates of usage of sports and leisure facilities compared to the Manchester average: in 2006 55% of Bradford residents had used sports or leisure facilities in the past 12 months compared to 66% of Manchester residents overall. Large scale sports facilities had been built in the area for the 2002 Commonwealth Games but not a local pool. It is possible that residents wanted a swimming pool for its symbolic or community value rather than practical value, since they were often mentioned in the context of community facilities by interviewees. Pools may have wider significance in an area, for mental health in an area of stress,

socialisation, status of the area for example (Thomson et al., 2003). NDC did fund some capital projects but did not see a pool as a priority in the context of limited funds. NDC and local council/government officers saw this as an area where their professional judgement was adequate for making the decision:

We only had one [swimming pool] why don't you use ones that are local already, you're not using them and they cost too much, blah blah blah, why would we build a swimming baths?... The people have said we want one, and we're saying you'll not get one and this is the reason you're not going to get it.... I think everyone has their own ideal version of, you know, oh it would be lovely to have a swimming pool, but do they go swimming every day?

Interview, NDC Officer 5

The funding, financial administration, monitoring, main thematic areas, geographical scope and staffing of the programme were managed by national and local government. This was more than gentle 'steering' by the state; these areas were significant aspects of the programme, and demonstrated the ways in which the programme was subject to the metagovernance and network management of the national and local state.

5.4.2 Participatory Governance

While the programme was heavily managed in some respects by central and local government, the NDC partnership could be considered a governance network since it brought various actors together to engage in governing, concerning both its own funding stream but also to influence local public services. In practice, the private sector had little involvement, partly because there were few businesses in what was an area which had experienced significant industrial decline. The voluntary sector had some involvement in NDC groups and Ward Coordination, but had a weak history of working together (East Manchester NDC, 1999) and some voluntary organisations also preferred to maintain a distance from government programmes for political or other reasons.

There were various groups within East Manchester NDC, outlined below, which created opportunities for resident participation, some of which were open to any local resident or interested organisation while others were constituted more formally in terms of

membership and were restricted to particular representatives. Groups were organised so that a small number of residents had places on the board, but wider groups of residents could attend other forums which fed into to the board, or could attend informal participatory or consultation events. Residents had been involved in designing this structure. Membership of groups for public services and the voluntary sector were arranged in a similar way, to enable broad engagement without the board becoming large and unmanageable. Thus, engagement in East Manchester was structured through various linked groups and formed a network arrangement.

5.4.2.1 Resident Participation

The NDC programme's main effort, with regards to local resident participation, was to promote local neighbourhood/resident based groups, often formed of residents of one or two streets. Some resident groups in the area had existed before the introduction of NDC, but NDC built up local residents groups with the support of a Resident Liaison Officer, who provided advice and training support. This approach grew out of the local authority's housing department's approach of supporting tenant and existing resident forums in the area (some NDC officers previously worked in housing). The number of groups reported at different stages varied over time, from between 11 at the beginning of 1999, 31 at the end of 1999, 44 in 2002, 68 in 2003, and 52 in 2005 and 2007. This reflects a peak of programme activity in around 2003. There were smaller numbers of these groups that actually sent representatives to attend NDC or other meetings: in 2007 only around 14 resident groups were represented at the Residents Forum meetings.

Some residents stayed at this very local level but some used it as a first stage in a progression to become involved at a higher level in NDC groups; in this way the promotion of local resident groups increased the level of involvement of residents in the NDC partnership. All NDCs were required to operate with a board responsible for making decisions about programme direction and spending of funds, of which at least 50% had to be made up of residents. In practice this was not always realised across all NDCs nationally but was in East Manchester. Residents were voted on to the East Manchester NDC board and had to be a member of a resident's association in the local area; these associations could send up to two representatives to NDC meetings. In order for residents to vote, their resident's association group also had to have a certain level of

attendance at NDC meetings. The residents' association groups were represented by area (Clayton, Beswick or Openshaw) on the NDC board; these groups were therefore an important structure for resident involvement.

On the East Manchester NDC board there were 12 people with voting rights: six residents, four from the public sector, one from the voluntary sector, and one business representative (more people than this could attend board meetings but these were the only voting members). East Manchester NDC consciously avoided having a large board as this was seen to be unwieldy for a decision making and consensus-based structure. The NDC board also had representatives from the Public Agencies Forum (described below) and a voluntary sector network. Board representatives were elected annually, and resident representatives were elected as chair or vice chair, which rotated. There was recognition that early efforts to promote resident participation had not focused enough on young people or minority groups, but more efforts were made, particularly with young people, later on in the programme. The Residents Forum fed into the NDC board through representatives, and was open to residents' associations and groups in the area. It was less formally run than the NDC board and had a relatively wide remit which covered the progress of Task Groups, information about local organisations, services or initiatives, and any local concerns or problems brought up by residents.

Task groups were formed at the beginning of the programme, to make decisions about different thematic areas such as education and to decide on priorities for project funding. These ran for several years and were open to any resident, as well as public services. Task groups were set up in response to consultation about what residents' priorities were (East Manchester NDC, 1999) and broadly matched the national NDC programme's thematic areas, although there was no health task group.

Active residents represented the local community in the various groups of the NDC network rather than there being very large numbers of local residents involved. This was not unique: limited engagement occurred in other NDCs despite extensive efforts of programmes to inform and invite residents (Wallace, 2005). Across NDC's by 200, 62% of the population in these areas said they had never been involved in any NDC activity (Duffy et al., 2008). There was therefore less community participation than the NDC officers would have liked. Public satisfaction surveys were used to gauge the opinions

of a broader range of residents in the area, partly to compensate for the lack of active involvement.

East Manchester NDC also had a wide ranging strategy that included events and consultations, particularly early in the programme, to involve residents who were not members of groups or who did not attend local public meetings and forums. There were annual 'Parties in the Park' for residents, during which creative consultations were carried out (such as a washing line for people to hang up cards for what they thought was 'top' or 'pants'). A larger proportion of residents attended these events (Blakeley and Evans, 2009) which were useful for passing on information to and receiving feedback. A local newspaper (The Advertiser) was also launched in 2002 to promote communication with residents. Other initiatives included a video being delivered to every household with information about the programme, the publication of a 'jargon buster', the development of a local website (Eastserve), a video feedback booth at one event, distribution of leaflets and packs, a local information bus to drive around the local area, information boards, a directory of local services, printing and distribution of a summary of the annual report on a tea towel, and training, e.g. in computer skills, for residents groups.

There were also other forms of involvement in the area through groups, such as school governors, church groups, tenants associations, Homewatch, Friends of Parks and local steering groups for neighbourhood planning and housing redevelopment. Some groups had connections with NDC but were not linked directly to the Residents Forum. In 2005 an NDC-commissioned survey showed that residents in the NDC area had slightly higher levels of belonging to a local organisation and having responsibility in one, over the previous three years, compared to nearby areas with similar socio-economic profiles (Kwest Research, 2005).

Residents could therefore participate in the network of NDC groups at a variety of levels, and could also maintain informal contact with NDC through local consultations and events. These various routes opened up possibilities for residents to become involved in NDC and other groups to influence public services.

5.4.3 Summary

This section has described the East Manchester NDC programme as a temporary governance network, steered heavily by central government. However the programme also had a strong participatory ethos and was structured to include residents in decision making through various forums and activities. There were consequent tensions in the programme which were partially resolved by NDC conceiving of participation in terms of ‘partnership’.

5.5 Institutional Perspectives

This section discusses some of the institutional features which shaped the network and which affected the extent to which residents were able to engage. The NDC network was a complex institutional environment: it had its own institutional features, but was also affected by public sector practices because it was staffed by local authority employees. Public services were also shaped by their own institutional factors and aims which affected how they responded to resident aspirations. Environmental services are focused on as they were a sub-case study for the research. Residents also had their own perspectives and aims based on personal interests and their perception of the needs of their community.

NDC officers, public service employees and residents all engaged in the network in dynamic and strategic ways in order to pursue their aims, but the institutional environment limited resident influence since it was largely affected by public sector cultures and practices. This section describes interactions and change which affected participation processes and outcomes, firstly in terms of cultural change in public services which NDC tried to effect, and secondly in terms of how actors in the network engaged with each other in struggles over resources.

5.5.1 Cultural Change

East Manchester NDC attracted and affected local public services through its status as a new, well-funded programme and through formal initiatives designed to reorient public services. This section describes ways in which NDC tried to change local services, and how services responded.

5.5.1.1 NDC's Status

NDC had status as a new initiative with high-profile backing from central government, with ministerial visitors and high-level support from the City Council. It also had status as a new and innovative programme, at least in its early days, and was attractive to local public sector employees as a partner organisation because of this:

It was new, it was different, it was a new approach to doing things, it was exciting. The government, the number of ministers that we had here was just phenomenal. That all helps. We're very high profile. People wanted to be part of it.

Interview, NDC Officer 1

Its newness also gave it status associated with hope, success and distant from old regeneration failures or past neglect. As well as it being a new and interesting initiative for local public services, the support of senior council officers also helped to promote NDC to services:

I do believe genuinely it's, it's been a big enough organization to pull people in. And to have that influence. I think, you know, because it's been very closely allied with, with the city council, the fact that it's had [council officer] for the New East Manchester side of it, he's quite an influential figure. I, I think that's helped it enormously in people taking it seriously. And I think... because of its size, stature, money that it's got to spend. I think that does affect who it draws in through it and what the offer can be... And there was a big offer with New Deal for Communities, not just the money.

Interview, NDC Officer 3

The culture of the programme itself had a strong ethos of community participation and promoted the role of participation in improving the area and local services, as reflected in the Delivery Plan for the programme:

The work of all the Task Groups and the self-assessment carried out by agencies alongside lessons emerging from the Best Value process indicate an overwhelming consensus that the status quo has failed and that the delivery of services can be improved dramatically. This failure of mainstream agencies to provide effective and responsive services has compounded the need for NDC....

- *those services which are provided are often not responsive to the needs of the community or are not publicised to the community.*
- *the community feels disengaged from service providers and disempowered.*

There is a feeling that services are done 'to' the community, not 'with' or even 'for'. There is no community involvement in the management of the neighbourhood.

(East Manchester NDC, 1999: 69)

However, NDC's status was not enough to impress its participatory policies and ideas about service improvement on public services, through role modelling for example. For example, there did not appear to be any significant effect on public service employees of attending NDC meetings in terms of learning from their practices and taking them back to their own organisations. However, NDC did use its status to place its own officers on the boards and steering groups of local service partnerships and in Ward Coordination meetings. Approaches tended to be carefully informative and persuasive rather than confrontational, especially in initial stages:

My tactic is very much to do it from (1) an evidence-based side, so "Actually, things aren't working". Secondly, from supportive, "OK what can we do about this, we need to work together on this one". And thirdly it's not about beating people across the head, it's actually about constructive challenge. If there's then resistance that's when you do the sort of very, you go in with two feet then, much heavier.

Interview, NDC Officer 6

I think people like us have made that change really. We've brought people together here in East Manchester in a way that's said "This is a neighbourhood, let's look at the neighbourhood, let's have a meeting with residents" and challenge and promote and encourage those kinds of people that provide those services to think "Actually we are, we are accountable to residents here, we're not some anonymous huge organization that does things in a certain way and never, never changes" We've encouraged people to hear more and develop those kind of closer community-facing locally-based relationships with residents, so that residents are seen as individuals and as customers rather than someone at the end of the phone who's mithering.

Interview, NDC Officer 5

Residents benefitted from the status that NDC lent them through the symbolic power of the ideas about community engagement which had been imported into the area with the weight of central government:

Instead of telling us what they want to do, it was about what did we need and how that would pan out. And because the government had said no initiative will work unless residents are involved, it was a case of selling officers and councils that, you can't do this without their support.

Interview, Resident 1

As a result of this, residents' attitudes had become more confident in dealing with public services: NDC was a prominent initiative and lent status to residents through its participatory emphasis. They became a group who had to be consulted and who had a legitimate right to be heard, in contrast to past experiences where they had felt their concerns had been dismissed by the local authority and services:

This is the other thing, you can ring the council now or other bodies and it's that very old service of "Well actually you've rang the wrong number, I'll pass you on to somebody else, de de de". It's such an old story that everyone will tell you. You get passed from pillar to post, it's a different person, it's a different department. And so, with the regeneration, and I've got to say [NDC Officer] and the rest of the team have sort of nurtured that. "It is a regeneration, this is all about consultation and you're demanding your rights to those services." So we did for a

while get really vain and we'd ring up places just an odd job or whatever and we'd go "Yeah, there's this that and the other problem" "Yeah you rang the wrong...". And then you'll go "You know this is a consultation area, this is a regeneration area with billions being spent" and they'll go "hang on, we'll get you somebody in charge". And it gave you that power. It was power.

Interview, Resident 5

I think what New Deals has given us is the confidence to actually, even if we don't know who they are, is to actually get in touch and say "Right, I need to speak to an officer that's dealing with such and such". And it's, it's not being put off anymore. You don't get put off any more, because we've been there and we've done that and we've learned an awful lot ... The street lights aren't working and someone's not coming out to do them, I'll persist until I get somebody out to do them. Whether I know people or not.

Interview, Resident 1

5.5.1.2 Resident Adaptations

Although residents felt more confident and that their concerns had more status as a result of NDC, they were limited in how they could behave 'acceptably' in the NDC network. Being assertive was important as this was seen as a way to incite a response from services, as one resident commented *"I am a great believer, the louder you shout, the more you get heard."* (Interview, Resident 9). Some public service employees also had this view: one service manager interviewee reported that service personnel attended more meetings in one area of the city where residents were 'more vociferous'. Residents felt very strongly about regeneration and local services, and NDC had arrived in the area against a background of moral indignation from residents over their area having been neglected for so long. When NDC was implemented *"there was a lot of angry people about"* (Interview, Resident 11), residents' behaviour in meetings was *"very vitriolic...we were very up in their faces and shouting and very, very loud"* (Interview, Resident 8) and hence meetings *"used to be like World at War"* (Interview, Resident 6).

Residents had a certain strength of feeling about their area which was seen by them as a positive attribute, signalled commitment to the area and was justified because of how

services had failed them, but this anger or its context was not well understood by public services:

If the residents hadn't have been angry and bothered about the area that they lived in they would have just left and gone away, and the area would have been skeleton town or, the community would have gone.

Interview, Resident 7

Sometimes they don't understand why you're getting angry with them. You're getting angry because you're not getting the service you should be getting.

Interview, Resident 1

Residents had to be careful about being too aggressive even when they were communicating emotive issues; heated emotions were especially unacceptable to the public sector and were not seen as being effective:

One of the simplest strategies that people use is to go to a public meeting and shout. Which tends to be unsuccessful.

Interview, Voluntary Sector Representative 2

You get some people that, that can go to the meetings and they, they know if they ask, how can I say it, politely, if they ask, not politely but if they're open about what they actually want then they're going to get the answer nine times out of ten that they want to hear. If you go there and you're aggressive and you're, then the chair's going to turn round and say "Look, hold on, calm down, if you don't calm down then I'm going to ask you to leave the meeting". So you've got to be, because it covers a wide range of issues and people's emotions do get hold of them... so if you can conduct yourself in the right manner then you're going to get, nine times out of ten, you probably will get more, more than what you want. People will do that extra mile for you, aren't they?

Interview, Public Service Employee 1

This level of conflict reduced over time, as residents adapted to a more 'acceptable' way of behaving in public meetings. NDC officers were instrumental in this early in the

programme, through providing training for example, and through East Manchester NDC's code of conduct, quoted from here:

In contributing to the meeting individuals will ensure that comments they make do not amount to a personal attack on another individual and should avoid using heated or emotional language and behaviour.

(East Manchester NDC, 2004c: 5-6)

Over time residents adapted to the unacceptability of heated emotions, becoming less confrontational and more strategic:

In East Manchester they had a, a lot of the different resident areas had very, they had reputations for being very outspoken, very confrontational on the approach they'd take if they wanted something doing, to get the placards out and start bawling at people. That changed because the whole way they could actually engage with local government and central government altered and you couldn't get anywhere that way because you were just dismissed effectively if you, if you took that route. And they actually got very clued up very quickly about "We need to be doing this, take the problem to them, we had to take the solution to them" and we say "We'll work in partnership in this" and they knew, they learnt the language and the approach to take to get solutions to the problems.

Interview, Voluntary Sector Representative 4

NDC also mediated heated emotions and promoted better relationships with services, often by communicating with residents and then public services, thereby avoiding direct confrontation between the two:

If I come into you and say "Your service is crap and you're not doing this and you're not doing that" I think it's kind of a negative thing really, you think the service is crap you're not going to listen to anyone else you know? But if you go and have a rant at somebody like [NDC Officer] say, you can then go and speak to the inspector "Right. I've had an irate person come in" but it's discussed and dealt with in a more calm and professional level. And I think that's what I can say for the approach, it's more constructive.

Interview, Voluntary Sector Representative 6

As well as being less openly hostile, residents also had to manage their behaviour in terms of avoiding being seen as ‘nagging’ or ‘moaning’, which was difficult since they had many ongoing demands for better services. Addressing area-wide concerns, as public agencies did, rather than very local or personal concerns as many residents did, was one way to address service issues in an acceptable way, as attending meetings to make demands for purely personal benefits was deemed less appropriate:

We'll you've got to make, tell, you know, when they get to know that you're not just a persistent mitherer and a pain in the neck. That you actually do care and you are a proper person who's really interested in the area and not somebody who wants their back door putting back on and their bin emptied. And you're working for the area. Then they know you're genuine.

Interview, Resident 7

‘Moaning’, especially about more personal or very localised issues, was something the more engaged, experienced residents had learned not to do and in some cases residents applied these standards of behaviour to new residents who had not learned the ‘rules’:

Fieldnotes, NDC Meeting December 2007

One resident says “They’re still at the moaning stage” of other residents who are newer to the meeting, who want to know why another area has had housing improvements and theirs hasn’t.

Residents would still challenge services, but in a less openly hostile way, through asking a pointed question for example, or trying to shame or embarrass a service about their lack of action over a problem. In the context of NDC, which championed resident participation, and local meetings where services reported in front of peers in a partnership setting, services were under some pressure to perform and residents used this fact to try to influence them.

Residents managed their engagement behaviour by adapting it to acceptable standards, not shouting, nagging or being too emotional, but maintained their ability to put pressure on services by acting more strategically in their engagement in the NDC network. In this way they managed to find an acceptable way to be assertive and to put

pressure on public services, while being accepted in the NDC network as a valid participant. NDC also mediated where conflict did occur.

5.5.1.3 Public Agencies Forum and Formal Initiatives

There were various initiatives which East Manchester undertook to influence public sector practices and cultures, largely through the Public Agencies Forum (PAF) whose remit was to reorient and improve services at the strategic level. The PAF was the main substructure within the NDC network to involve public services in East Manchester NDC, to share information between them and for NDC to influence public services. The PAF nominally had six residents on it with the purpose of linking residents to regeneration efforts; in practice PAF meetings observed tended to have one or two residents attending and some meetings in 2007 had no residents present. The forum has also seen the level of seniority of attendees fall off over time:

The PAF's always been difficult to maintain that seniority of membership...I just think over time, you know, people come cos it's new and it's exciting and then when that becomes normal it becomes less important, so agencies of course have all got their own lives haven't they, to be focusing on and we're becoming more and more yesterday's news. You know which is just naturally what happens, isn't it?

Interview, NDC Officer 2

The lack of stability of senior personnel was a wider problem in NDC programmes:

Although many NDCs originally secured the engagement of senior agency personnel, there has been a tendency too for these key players to move on to be replaced by middle managers unable to make strategic commitments.

(Lawless, 2007: 19)

The lack of residents in the PAF and the distance from senior levels at the local authority created a distance in the NDC network between residents and strategic levels of management in public services. However, NDC officers built relationships with public services early on in the programme and implemented various initiatives to

change public service cultures. One of the first efforts was to assess their participatory practices through self-assessment, as noted in the programme's Delivery Plan:

At the beginning of the NDC process, every public and voluntary sector agency was challenged to consider their approach to service provision, what they could stop and start doing and how they could use their resources better. All major service providers have been engaged in discussions concerning our NDC approach and the importance of their role in the initiative. They have accepted the principle [sic] objectives of this approach to service provision and the need to change to ensure the quality of local services is maximised.

(East Manchester NDC, 1999: 19)

Other initiatives included an Equality Strategy, Customer Care Standards which services signed up to, Interagency Training and a Social Inclusion Toolkit. The Inter Agency Training Project which employees of various public services could attend began in 2001/2002 and ran until 2007. It aimed to promote interagency working by promoting networking between individuals, which was useful for those working with the same client groups, and understanding of what different services did. The Social Inclusion Toolkit was produced to promote accessibility by all groups (e.g. older people) to services, with tips, good practice examples and pledges for those working in public services. A 'Rough Guide to Services' for use by front line staff was also produced and NDC also ran seminars for public service employees in the early days of the programme with the aim of providing information about regeneration and encouraging joint working.

These initiatives tended not to involve residents directly; projects were led by NDC officers. While these programmes were generally viewed positively, addressing cultural change in services was acknowledged to be a challenging undertaking. Public sector employees showed a low awareness of such initiatives during interviews for the research, though this could be partly due to staff turnover. Even for initiatives they had heard of, there was very little evidence of real awareness or change as a result, as these interviewees demonstrated when asked about the local authority's engagement strategy:

Interviewer: Have you heard of the community engagement strategy?

Respondent: I've heard of it!

Interviewer: How familiar are you with the detail of it?

Respondent: I'm just remembering what it looks like now, it's on my shelf in the office... I'm just trying to remember the exact, I can see the pictures but...

Interview, Public Service Manager 3

Interviewer: Have you heard of the Community Engagement Strategy, being produced by Manchester City Council?

Respondent: Kind of, yeah, yeah, remind me of...

Interview, Public Service Manager 5

NDC also attempted to establish joint targets with services, although over time this had little impact because monitoring regimes constantly changed. A more successful approach was the piloting of various programmes such as the Wardens programme and Neighbourhood Nuisance, initially funded by projects approved by residents, which were eventually adopted by a local housing association. NDC also attracted some pilots to East Manchester, such as the Street Environment Managers, because it was an area where new initiatives were being tried out, and residents had some input into these services through local meetings.

5.5.1.4 Service Responses

Local public services responded to these initiatives to varying degrees. At a senior level of public services, engagement was secured through contacts with senior council officers. However, this engagement was not universal throughout different levels of services, as East Manchester NDC's Delivery Plan reported:

Whilst most stakeholder agencies are fully involved in the Beacons [NDC] initiative there has been a difficulty in ensuring staff at all levels, particularly of larger agencies, are fully aware of what is happening and recognise the importance of their role. At the most senior levels of public agencies, acknowledgment has been secured concerning the importance of NDC, including the philosophy underpinning it.

(East Manchester NDC, 1999: 79)

Services responses to NDC and its participation initiatives improved over time as attitudes changed gradually after pressure from NDC officers:

*I think that when we started here services needed a kick up the ****. I think that not only did residents have low aspirations of services but services themselves had low aspirations of what they should be doing. And the excuse of, from the teacher, “Oh it’s only East Manchester, it’s only East Manchester, blah blah blah”. It’s not good enough. And I think, I think politically that view is unacceptable now. And I think that services are getting the message and getting the gist of that.*

Interview, NDC Officer 6

Services varied in the extent to which they engaged with the New Deal programme and with local residents: those with more staff out in the community because of the nature of the service and which had fewer top-down pressures, such as libraries and environmental services, found it easier to adopt more participatory approaches. Those services with more complex relationships with the community such as the police and services which dealt with anti-social youth had more difficulties. Health services were a very particular local case as they had been affected by major restructuring of the PCTs in the area, and consultation and engagement with local residents became a lost issue due to lack of capacity while this was taking place.

Environmental services engaged relatively well, after a slow start, after NDC persuaded them to broaden their outlook around the scope of service they could deliver in the area:

The environment programme was slow to engage with all statutory partners at first, but has engaged with a broad range of environmental interest agencies to deliver and initiatives in the most effective way.

(East Manchester NDC, 2007: 23)

This included persuading services to think beyond their narrow service remit:

I remember the original response from what was then Operational Services was “Well, we’ve done an audit and we are responsible for” (i.e. the council) “for sixty four per cent of the land”. And I said “Well yes, and therefore we clean it. But fine, the problem is that residents will hold us responsible for 100% of the land.” It’s

simple... So one of the early things we got them to do, and I think just by force of persuasion and if you like, was to say look you know, accept responsibility for the entire environment of East Manchester... And I think to be fair to Operational Services, they've accepted that challenge.

Interview, Council/Regional Government Officer 2

Environmental services engaged relatively well, whereas other service responses were more mixed. Residents had complaints about police attitudes for example:

Respondent: The police are the biggest problem. They still are.

Interviewer: Are they?

Respondent: Yes

Interviewer: How are they different from others?

Respondent: Because they only do what they want to do. They won't work with us. There have been cases where they've worked with us, and once they've started working with everybody it's been great. But then they back off then...

Interview, Resident 3

Fieldnotes, Local Meeting February 2007

A resident asks why local meetings that the police held with local people have stopped. It used to be "where you could have a go at them [the police]". People laugh, but the man is serious. He thinks the police have "run away". The response from the police officer is that they now have area meetings every six weeks and residents can go to those meetings. The resident says that the police are dodging issues by not having the other, more frequent, meetings and comments "It would be nice to see a copper now and then".

The police service engaged to a much greater degree when local superintendents were introduced to the area who were interested in changing and improving the service (Fordham et al., 2010).

Education and social services were also difficult for residents to engage with, as they were unwilling to attend local meetings and there was therefore little contact:

Fieldnotes, NDC Meeting March 2007

Residents had been given cards through their letterboxes, with information to call truant officers if saw children were out of school. But two residents did that and had no response. One resident comments that the Local Education Authority is known for not responding. Social Services did not respond to one resident either. Another resident suggests they could get a team from education to come to a meeting and answer questions or talk about the issue. Someone replies that they requested their presence at another local meeting but they didn't show up.

Some agencies have been very hard to connect with. Social services being one of them. Education welfare is another one of them. They make excuses about limited funds or someone's on holiday and can't come to a meeting. And I can't tell you how many times we've said "Well we're just not happy". You know, "You need to go higher, someone needs to be here to address the problems that we've got".

Interview, Resident 1

While engagement and cultural change did occur after time, then, it was not even across services or across different levels within a service. The police, education and social services were subject to more regulations and targets than environmental services, possibly explaining why they were perceived by residents to be less responsive. Overall, the influencing and reorienting of public services remained a difficult area for East Manchester NDC, as the 2002 Annual Review of the programme reported:

The NDC goal of challenging and changing public services, making them more responsive to local need and the bending of mainstream resources is the greatest and most difficult challenge of the partnership to date.

(East Manchester NDC, 2002: 6)

The updated Delivery Plan for the programme noted that services were constrained in how they could respond to residents by targets and other restrictions:

It is often not the necessarily a simple unwillingness to participate - agencies are often constrained by local regional or national guidelines that restrict their ability to join in. Often funding streams specify the breadth of activity that they can get involved in do not allow for the flexibility needed to participate in projects and

examine new ways of working. Often internal priorities and pressure of work do not allow the time needed to examine new ways of working that will provide a much better service in the longer term.

(East Manchester NDC, 2003: 62)

I always remember, for instance, sitting down with a sergeant from the police saying "The trouble about all this stuff that you're working on in East Manchester is it's a bit like rising damp - it only goes so far with the police". He said it gets to about sergeant level, he said, but when you get beyond me the top-down targets are still crushing.

Interview, Council/Local Government Officer 2

Public service employees experienced tensions, having to balance resident aspirations with other factors driving services, particularly performance targets and their own professional judgements. Environmental service employees attributed multiple factors in their decision making, including targets and professional judgements:

Respondent: Well we have KPIs, Key Performance Indicators, so we, we set our own targets which is decided in, in house ... But we also talk to the residents and get feedback from the residents to say "Right well, you know, what are your, what are your key problems, what, what, what do you feel we should be doing?"...

Interviewer: But mainly when you're setting your targets, if you're thinking about what residents might want, do you tend to go more on your conversations with residents rather than the survey?

Respondent: No, no, I mean we'll try and get a happy medium between the two. We'll look at the survey, and we'll look at the survey look at the results of the survey. We'll also speak to what the residents group want and the, the residents that are not involved ...And everyone's got to have an input and you've got to say "Right OK well there's two or three of us that are highlighting a problem that needs dealing with, you know, and it needs sorting out"

Interview, Public Service Employee 1

We've had times when I've sat with [resident groups] and they've said "No but we want this not that, we want it done like this and not that". You know, we'll have

them discussions and usually they win, you know but it has to be a balance on what's right and wrong, and we've got to take a professional view.

Interview, Public Services Manager 4

There were various constraints on services in terms of how they could respond to residents, but the variations across time, at different levels of services and between services indicate that, to some extent, services also chose whether and how to respond.

5.5.1.5 Perceptions of Local Problems

A further aspect of cultural factors which affected the dynamics of participation and change was the ways in which different groups perceived local problems. While there was broad agreement about the thematic areas in need of attention to address the problems in the local area, there were some differences between public sector and resident perceptions. For example, residents had relatively low levels of interest in health and employment (the latter possibly because most active residents were of retirement age). Additionally, public sector perceptions of local problems were framed by their timescales and current working assumptions; these differed from residents' way of seeing the problems of their local community and the solutions that were needed. In particular, residents saw their area and problems more in terms of generations and change over long periods of time, with family and youth issues emerging over the long term. This was in contrast to the short project and programme timescales that the public sector worked under.

Residents tended to have a strong sense of a particular history of their area as a white, working class area with a history of industrial pride; when public art or memorial projects were mentioned, for example, residents often wanted the history and industrial heritage of the area commemorated. There was also a perception of subsequent decline and neglect of the area by both the local council and national regeneration. This formed the background to their early cynicism to the new NDC programme, in contrast to the excitement of public sector employees who had more of a tendency to look forward to the next initiative rather than looking back at past failures.

Residents tended to express timescales in terms of generations rather than the project cycle and had a generational consciousness, a sense of people growing up and growing old within the area, which was a factor in some active residents' involvement since many of them had grandchildren:

Wanting to, the right thing to happen. No, from my, for people who live near me and for my children cos, and my grandchildren, it's the next generations that we now have to, I now have to think about.

Interview, Resident 7

Therefore, although active residents tended to be older, they brought up young people issues as a concern. This was often in terms of anti-social behaviour and they were conscious of the limited perspectives of the current youth becoming problems for the future when they grew up. They often expressed their own theories about the importance of families, the role of parents and the long term cycle of generations in the area:

Fieldnotes, NDC Meeting January 2007

Residents comment on ongoing youth problems. They feel that projects have dealt with the current or very recent generation of young people causing problems, and have helped or diverted them, but there are younger children growing up who are causing problems. One resident says she sees younger children around who she can see will be causing trouble in a year's time.

When you've seen a whole generation not working and you're brought up in that environment, and then you go into it because there's still no work, you can't get somewhere to live, you've got no money, so you're living in that environment. And then they're having kids and they're being brought up in the same way.

Interview, Resident 2

Youth services were a fairly poorly funded area, not just in East Manchester, according to one NDC officer. In the 2006 Best Value survey (Ipsos Mori North, 2007), 83% of residents in the Bradford Ward (compared to a Manchester average of 68%) thought that parents not taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children was a problem locally, and this was the highest scoring problem for this ward. Activities for children

and young people, and anti-social behaviour as local problems also scored highly in the area.

Issues to do with children and young people in the area were a concern for residents, however resident comments received little response from public services. A key difference between resident and public sector views was that of providing activities for children who had been excluded from school or who were in various kinds of trouble through bad behaviour, which was seen by services as inputting positive experiences which would be beneficial in the long term, and was seen by residents as rewarding bad behaviour. Responses from both NDC and local public agencies involved in providing services for children and young people tended to be very brief when these issues were brought up in meetings by residents and there was never any engaged debate:

Fieldnotes, NDC Meeting October 2007

A resident comments that a local child was kicked out of school, is in trouble, can't read and write, but he still goes on trips. Another resident asks about children causing trouble getting treats. An NDC officer responds that it is a complex and difficult issue, that they need to track children, they need parents on board and the children need aspirations.

Fieldnotes, NDC Meeting May 2007

There is a discussion about bribing young people with trips to attend school. Some residents don't agree with rewarding bad behaviour. Some think it will increase truancing. The youth intervention representative responds that they think it's OK to do for its long term benefits.

This was an example of where residents and the public sector did not view problems in the same way, and attitudes of services had not been particularly responsive to the views of residents.

5.5.2 Struggles Over Resources

Residents who engaged with NDC wanted improved services in their local area, in a context of institutional constraints discussed above, but also limited resources. Actors

had overlapping interests in good services in the area, but had different ideas about how to achieve this in terms of who would resource it and also used information in different ways in trying to achieve improvements. This section discusses the limitations of local resources in the area during the NDC period, the attempts by services to persuade residents to contribute their time resources in order to overcome this, and the focus of residents on persuading services to respond to their local concerns. All parties agreed that services needed improving, but tended to envisage the solution being for other parties to contribute rather than themselves.

5.5.2.1 Limited Local Resources

Resources were a key issue for public services employees, across services and including environmental services: operational services had very limited funds for addressing fly tipping for example (East Manchester Operational Services, 1998). Conflict over resources occurred nationally in NDC areas over resources (Fordham et al., 2010). Public environmental services (delivered by the Operations and Leisure Departments of the local authority) tended to address issues based on need in an area, rather than on spending exactly the same in each ward, although they did come under pressure from both residents and local councillors, and were sensitive about being seen to favour one area over another. Resources were always at the forefront of considerations but were a sensitive issue, especially as residents became more confident and demanding, and were therefore not always discussed openly:

Respondent: We can't really tell residents we haven't got money to put into the area

Interviewer: You can't?

Respondent: Well, you can. You can say it but you've got to be careful how you say it.

Interviewer: Why is that?

Respondent: Well, you know what they're like "I pay my council tax, all this, why aren't my streets, why aren't the streets clean and ne ne ne". They just get, they get on, bit on a high horse, because some areas, some streets in [area] say where you've got loads of kids and stuff on there, they're going to make a mess. But they'll see it swept and they'll think it's got to be like that all the time, but it's not

going to happen. We haven't got the resources.... And sometimes yeah we'll blatantly say we haven't got the money to do it.

Interviewer: Which residents find difficult to accept?

Respondent: Em, it just depends. Cos they always moan about it.

Interview, Public Service Employee 2

The introduction of NDC in the area provided additional resources which eased some pressures and also helped to attract services to the general NDC programme:

Spending a lot of money in an area does give you the opportunity to, you know you get a lot of interest don't you? I mean it is, if you're into all the public agencies saying "We've got money to invest come and help us think about it and think about how you're going to contribute to it". You know, that's much more attractive isn't it than just saying "We'd like you to come round the table because it's a good idea".

Interview, Council/Local Government Officer 2

NDC funded a wide range of environmental projects and initiatives, including the improvement of community gardens, open spaces, parks sports and play areas, and streetscapes. There were also road safety improvements, street lighting improvements and alleygating projects (where alleys are closed off at the end with gates, and refurbished inside, with plants for example, see Appendix III). NDC also ran a 'Make a Difference' grants scheme which was combined with cash grants from the City Council for small-scale environmental improvement schemes in community gardens and open spaces. There were also activities run for communities such as gardening competitions, clean up campaigns (such as picking up litter), and planting days. However, NDC initiatives either supported some capital development projects or small-scale projects, and did not address long term maintenance issues which remained the responsibility of the local public services.

5.5.2.2 Active Citizens

Joint working between environmental services and other departments and groups became more widespread and services were already realising the benefits of this for coping with limited resources:

I find by working together you resolve issues. You can nip things in the bud as opposed to being like a one man band being out there in [local area] on your own. It's good to have all these links. Now I'll, obviously if I see stuff out there which is not up me I'll pass it on and then it can be nipped in the bud say from housing agencies and stuff like that. And we just all work together that way. Works fantastic.

Interview, Public Service Employee 2

Resident participation was sometimes seen in this context, that residents were another partner who could help services improve through increasing personnel resources and that this was a legitimate role for residents, as the Delivery Plan reported:

There are high levels of dissatisfaction with the management of the local environment – issues of litter, poor quality open space and vandalism were all repeatedly raised. Local services are not tailored to the needs of the area, which requires intensive coordinated management. There is little partnership between service providers and the local community and no incentive for local people to play their role in looking after their own area.

(East Manchester NDC, 1999: 41)

Residents were encouraged in environmental services to participate in the maintenance of community gardens, alleygated areas and so on, and often these areas would be maintained to a higher standard:

I mean different schemes have taken off, and as you say you've been round and had a look yourself and some are like the hanging gardens of Babylon, they've done fantastic work. But that's the input from the residents themselves. They've taken you know, that commitment and, and when I go to residents groups I think that's the disappointing thing that they find sometimes, that other residents aren't quite as keen as, as they may be. And sometimes they feel as though they're doing it for, a minority are doing it for the majority. They love to come out in the summer when the, when the sun's shining but they won't go out there and sweep and do the weeding when it's a bit colder.

Interview, Public Services Manager 4

NDC and environmental services saw residents as a long term resource to maintain some of the changes that were being put in place during the NDC programme, once the funding had run out, although residents which did not always see this as their responsibility. This was evident in the initiatives to improve parks, open spaces and community gardens where there were hopes that residents would continue maintenance once refurbishment had been carried out. In practice, this tended to rely on one or two committed residents who would not necessarily remain in the area, and other residents would not remain engaged, leading to deterioration of the sites. This varied by area however:

[Park], we've never really had a successful friends group there because people do not believe in that area that it's their responsibility. They believe the council should be sorting it out and the responsibility's with Leisure. But some of the other parks [mentions two other parks] have very active friends groups. And, you know, they see that they've got a role to play in doing their bit, and you know, they will get out, roll their sleeves up and dig.

Interview, NDC Officer 3

Residents were also encouraged to participate in 'clean up' campaigns where local service employees and residents would conduct litter picking and other types of cleaning activity for the area. However, few residents actively engaged in delivering environmental improvements in the area, which were effectively volunteering projects. Resident participation in delivering environmental services did not, therefore, significantly resolve the issue of limited resources in the area.

In a context of limited resources, residents tried to use the NDC network to exert influence over public services to improve them: not by volunteering to deliver services themselves but by involving themselves in governing to increase resources or the effectiveness of services in their area. While active residents did do this, a greater proportion of local residents either did not participate at all or else attended meetings only when there were very local issues being dealt with that affected them very directly:

The trouble with residents, Sarah, is when they've got a problem, they'll come to a meeting, yeah, they'll come to the meeting. And as soon as their problem gets solved, they walk away.

Interview, Resident 3

This corroborates other findings (e.g. Hope and King, 2005) that residents tend to be most concerned about issues at a local or personal level. Residents were also conscious of a lack of investment from the public sector in their area, as mentioned above; this was the context for their engagement rather than notions that they had not volunteered enough in their area. However, the profile of residents was mixed, with some residents being interested in the wider good in the area:

It's the same story really – some people want to be engaged, some people want to be told, some people are not interested. Others will get involved in their specific interest groups and don't want to take it any broader than that. So I think there's a real mixture of people. And you've got some that are, if you like, professional activists that have genuine interest in their community and where they want it to be headed. You know, and are fully engaged. But I think you know they're in the minority.

Interview, NDC Officer 3

*I've actually had people say to me "Yeah, don't bother me [name]. Just leave me, I'm not ***** [bothered]. Just do whatever you're doing." ... So there's got to be some of us that do go to these boring meetings for hours at a time, that do see the wider picture. But the majority of people will just say "Well what about me?"*

Interview, Resident 5

Active resident involvement was associated with broader, altruistic concerns and being able to see the 'wider picture':

You'll find that most of the people who've been involved in this from the beginning, a lot of us have stuck with it all the way through because we wanted to see the change. We wanted to, we wanted to make the area a better place to live, not just for us but for like myself, I've got [mentions family member].

Interview, Resident 2

Respondent: A resident group came in for one reason. To see what, to see what was in for them, if they could get anything out of it. And once they got what they wanted they would leave and they wouldn't come back. The ones who stayed, like myself, [name], and the regular ones, we're there for a totally different reason.

Interviewer: What's that?

Respondent: To actually see the NDC programme through till the end. And to hope that at the end of it, we don't need an NDC.

Interview, Resident 4

Active residents had both concerns about services in their local area which motivated their involvement and a sense of devotion to their community in their area. This sometimes included volunteering, such as in community gardens for example, as mentioned above but was often focused on changing the area in a much broader sense through engaging in governing. There were some residents therefore, who modelled the 'active citizen' or 'good community' ideal. However, the concerns of most residents were to do with how services would solve problems or deliver adequate services to their immediate area or issue of concern; in practice they were much more concerned about public sector resources being available for them personally than on either wider issues or donating their time in some way to help resolve those problems themselves.

5.5.2.3 Exchange of Information

Aside from financial and material resources which were of concern, information was also a resource used by different actors. Participation in local governing involved interactions between active residents, NDC officers and public service representatives; this often took the form of information exchange. Information was a key resource which actors used and was the main resource which residents possessed since they had local knowledge. Information was important for both groups: public services were very keen for residents to provide local information because it extended their awareness of what was happening in the area, increased their legitimacy and ultimately contributed to their resident satisfaction rates. Residents lacked information about what services were doing in the area at times and wanted more communication about this. Ways in which information was assessed and used by services and residents were relatively complex: residents wanted honesty from services who did not always provide information openly,

while services wanted information from residents about the local area but sometimes had a tendency to value other types of information more.

Participation in governing required communication between actors, and in conversations and discussions about services in public meetings, services and residents had particular ways of communicating (or not communicating) that they used to advance their aims. Honesty was important to residents and was one of the ways in which NDC built trust with residents:

Respondent: [NDC Officer] and [NDC Officer] are trusted that they will tell us the truth.

Interviewer: They're trusted by residents?

Resident: Oh yes they are, very much so. If I ask [NDC Officer] a question I know that she'll give me an honest answer. Same applies to [NDC Officer].

Interviewer: But you don't have that sort of trust with the services?

Respondent: No. If I, if I went up to [NDC Officer] and said "Problem with the transport on our street" and [NDC Officer] will say "They don't have the funding". And I'll say "I know". But you phone them up they'll say "We will come and have a look, we will try our best". I said "That doesn't help" I said "The residents think 'Oh, they're going to come and sort it out'" They're not, they don't have the money to sort it out.

Interview, Resident 4

Honesty in communication was important to residents and was challenging to services who had to protect their public image and could be defensive or evasive:

It's good communicators and maybe those people haven't, don't have the power to directly affect whatever it is that people are asking for but I think people understand that and people respond well to people communicating well and honestly. Honest communication not spin....I think quite often sometimes there's been, people have been talked at and lots of nice words have been said but actually the actions haven't always backed it up or the channel of communication hasn't gone anywhere.

Interview, Voluntary Sector Representative 2

And I think the other thing is, early on in this process, it to some degree anyway, it became important to me anyway that agencies were honest with local people. If agencies weren't and people found out, the trust had gone then. If you say we can't do anything about that because we haven't got any funding or we might be able to help you out in a few month's time, rather than "Oh yes yes, leave it with us and we'll get back to you". And then two months go by and the problem's got worse and then they're really irate by that point. So it's just being honest and being straight with people.

Interview, Voluntary Sector Representative 6

In terms of residents communicating with services, they provided valuable local information to services, particularly for crime and environmental problems. Staff were not aware of every local problem as patrols were limited, and services relied on residents to report incidents or problems. Residents knowledge was complementary to information 'on paper' that agencies had (Fordham et al., 2010) but tended to be used as a first stage in gathering information by services. Furthermore, while resident information was valued, statistics tended to be regarded by public agency employees as more reliable sometimes:

It's the statistics - you have to have to prove that something's working.

Interview, Resident 6

You can say a 50% reduction in something, it's just how you play with figures as well. But if you're actually living there you say "Well this week we've have five cars stolen from our street" so it's a different kind of perspective isn't it?

Interview, Voluntary Sector Representative 6

In one instance, residents adapted to this by conducting their own survey of new housing, where complaints had been made about the poor quality of workmanship and the orientation of local agencies (not NDC) responsible for oversight were not always felt by local residents to be aligned to their concerns, as reported in the local press (Kenny, 2008). Resident complaints had been dismissed as not being representative, but their survey found that 24 out of 40 owners of new homes were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the quality of the homes, with 27 rating the workmanship as poor or very poor.

Residents were also conscious of living in the NDC area while regeneration officers and most public service employees would drive in from other areas. Some ground level service employees did live locally, but higher level managers did not. This led to a perceived lack of understanding of and empathy for some issues:

I mean, the trouble is they don't live where we live. You know, if it was on their doorstep they'd probably be kicking more backsides than what they do.

Interview, Resident 1

I'll just give you an instance on the environmental thing. We asked for an inspection, it'll be eighteen months even two years ago. And he comes out... and he's saying to us "You get done every Friday". And me and two other residents are saying "No we don't". He said "Oh yeah yeah, you do, you get done every Friday". And he wouldn't listen! And in the end, voices were raised. It was outside on the piece of grass actually. So I said "Right, you're saying that, we're telling you not. We live here, you don't. Come on then, let's see where they do every Friday!". And we shown him where stuff hadn't been touched from the previous bonfire night, because there was still, you know, fireworks. I said "Now, is that, was that done every Friday?" And he just said "Oh, well I can see..." I said "Right, well don't come here telling us what's happening. We live here and we know it's not happening." You know, and that's the type of thing that does get up people's nose. And they're telling you "Oh it does" because they've ticked a box. Well they can tick all the boxes they want, if they're not doing their job...

Interview, Resident 1

Residents asserted the value of their local knowledge therefore, even though services had sometimes tended to value other information to a greater degree. The attitude of services towards the value of information provided by residents may have changed over time to a degree:

I think probably more than anything else is that the way our board has operated has really woken up the agency representatives, the fact that residents quite often have some incredibly sensible views and I think that's been quite an eye opener to

some people who, who've assumed differently shall we say. Now whether they change anything as a result of that I'm not entirely convinced.

Interview, NDC Officer 1

Information was a key resource exchanged between residents and services in local meetings. Residents faced challenges in getting information from services at times and also in having their information accepted as legitimate, despite it being sought by services. This may have improved over time but remained a significant issue evident in meetings in the fieldwork year.

5.5.3 Summary

This section has discussed resident engagement in East Manchester NDC within an institutional perspective considering cultural aspects of public services and how actors engaged in the NDC network in struggles over resources, including information. NDC introduced possibilities for cultural change in local services through its status and initiatives it operated with public services. Residents used the status conferred on them by NDC and also adapted to public sector cultures. Service responses were mixed, and some underlying perceptions of problems, particularly to do with young people, did not change.

Services were subject to various pressures, including targets and resource limitations. Resident participation was welcomed by some services as a means to increase resources but residents (especially non-involved residents) tended to be largely interested in services inputting more resources to meet their demands rather than providing any themselves. Information exchange within the NDC network was one means active residents had of influencing services, as this was a critical aspect of decision making for services, but residents faced challenges in their information and local knowledge being accepted.

Thus, although residents became part of a local governance network, their participation and influence was limited by the cultures and resources limitations of the public sector despite the assistance of NDC. Residents did engage strategically and adapt to this environment to try to influence services however.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has described how a local NDC network was established in East Manchester, how it was structured and how institutional factors shaped some of the dynamics of governing that took place. The NDC programme instituted participation through the development of a network of groups, and had close links with other local governance groups in the area. This was a temporary network however, with a peak occurring in the middle of the programming period.

The NDC programme emerged from a public sector context but operated at arm's length, working with both other public sector agencies providing local services and with local residents. The East Manchester NDC programme was steered heavily by national government through the setting of parameters and funding structures for the programme, and was also financially governed by the local authority. The programme also promoted participation and encountered tensions because of this. The participatory ethos of the programme created opportunities for resident influence. This, however, was limited by the attitudes, cultures and practices of the public sector in various ways, despite cultural change initiatives that NDC had implemented.

The NDC network had various and overlapping institutional features but was also an environment within which the various actors strategically engaged. For example, residents engaged in the network using the status of NDC and 'community participation' in order to pursue their own aims within this context. Residents, therefore, engaged as rational actors within the overlapping institutional environment of the NDC network in order to influence services. Residents engaged largely to pursue their own rather than community aims, although active residents had more of a community focus. Services and residents both had interests in local material resources and in information used in interactions in governing, although they struggled over these from positions of differing perspectives and aims.

To summarise, although the metagovernance and management of the NDC network and institutional cultures of the public sector inhibited resident influence, there were also opportunities for residents to try to bring about change in local public services through ways in which residents engaged strategically within new network arrangements. There remained significant constraints to resident influence however and the cultural and

calculus aspects of governing dynamics (Hall and Taylor, 1996) were significant features of the governance network that affected resident participation and influence.

6 Findings: Brokers and Ties in the NDC Network

6.1 Introduction

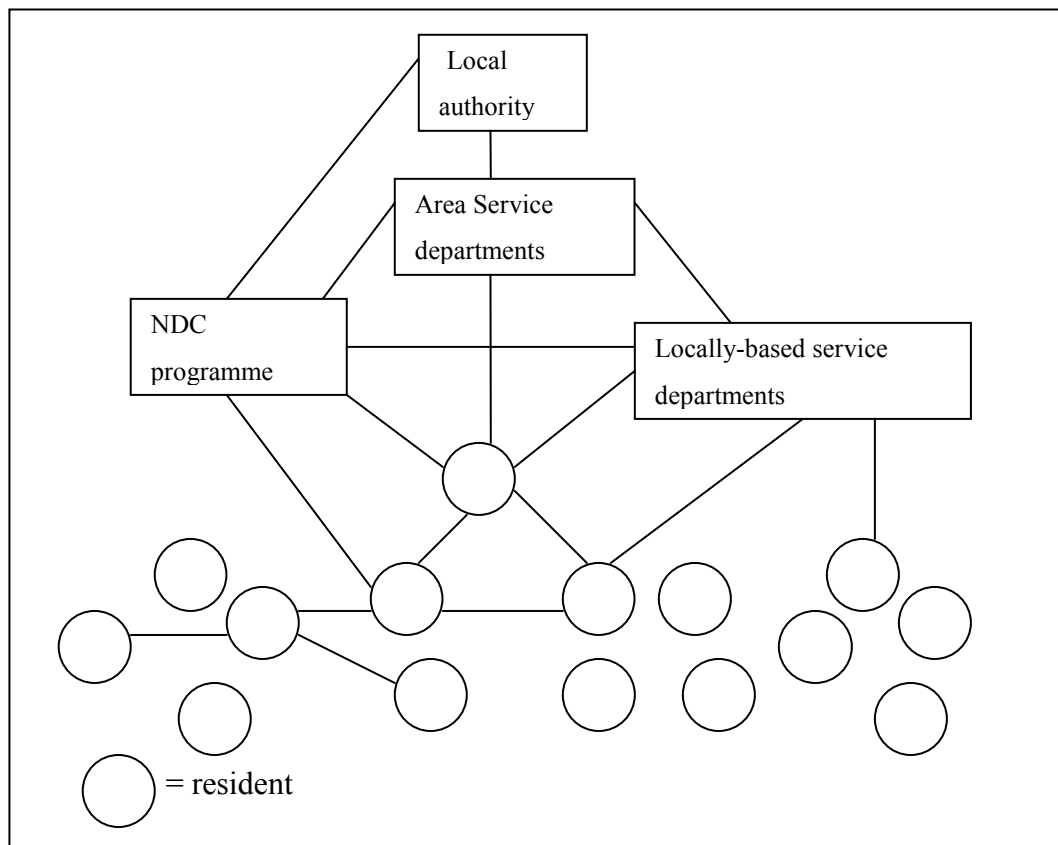
The previous chapter described how the NDC network acquired a particular structure due to various influences of national and local government. The participatory ethos of NDC was also discussed, including the cultural factors shaping processes in the NDC network and how actors attempted to achieve their aims within this context through various strategies, including through the management of information in various ways in the struggle over resources. While culturally embedded rational action can explain behaviours, this perspective tends to explain actors as locked into institutional contexts, refers to processes rather than outcomes, and also tends to explain lack of change. While the previous chapter has discussed how actors behaved strategically within a governance network, this chapter explores the role of agency in networks further in order to understand processes of change and addresses one of the research objectives which was to identify and explain resident influence occurring through brokers and network ties.

While the institutional environment of both NDC, as a nationally-framed programme, and public services was one which posed obstacles to the expression, governance networks also create an open and somewhat non-prescriptive environment for individuals within those networks to operate with some autonomy. This chapter discusses actors in the NDC network as brokers, who had particular characteristics and who bridged residents with public services. A description of different brokering functions follows, in terms of how NDC officers, public service employees and residents facilitated communication between actors, and how resident aspirations were supported through the advocacy of NDC officers in particular. Network ties are then described in terms of the quality of relationships between brokers and individuals in the NDC network, how these had changed over time and how they facilitated resident influence over public services.

6.2 Brokers in Networks

Actors can be conceptualised as ‘nodes’ within a network, where a node represents one individual that can be linked with others. In the NDC network, some nodes functioned as brokers, as individuals who facilitated exchanges or influence between other actors. Who individuals were in the NDC network was important and their responses varied greatly. NDC and NEM officers varied in their attitudes, as did public service employees and residents. Therefore, not all nodes acted as brokers. The actions of brokers were affected by various factors: public sector employees in services and NDC officers were not necessarily captured by their institutional environments, and personal factors such as their past work history also had an impact on their decisions. Already noted in the findings was the importance of a key council officer who persuaded senior public services employees to sign up to the NDC programme; this pattern of the significance of brokers was widespread throughout the NDC network. Active residents also functioned as brokers, facilitating communication between the NDC network and non-involved residents.

Figure 5.1: Network Brokers and Ties



The figure above represents different groups within the East Manchester governance network, with NDC and local level service departments forming key ‘nodes’ in the network that linked residents with services. Some residents were also well connected, others moderately and some had no ties with the governance network. The local authority and more strategic levels of public services were relatively cut off from residents and would normally have to be approached either by NDC officers or local service employees.

6.2.1 Broker Characteristics

Brokers were distinct kinds of nodes within the network, and their attitudes and behaviours were derived from a combination of factors, including institutional backgrounds, personal values, personal histories and sometimes learning from previous jobs they had held. Brokers were not necessarily leaders but they did link other actors in the network, to build relationships between them, pass on information or advocate for them.

Individuals did not end up as brokers necessarily by accident: the NDC network was partly shaped by voluntary engagement, particular sorts of individuals were attracted to the network. One or two interviewees hinted that a better quality of public service employees had been directed to the area, ostensibly to address poor services but also because NDC was in the area and ‘things were happening’. NDC officers were specifically selected during programme recruitment for their experience in participation but also volunteered:

Interviewer: And so driven people are attracted to regeneration areas because there's a lot going on?

Respondent: Yeah, yeah. Exactly that. They're, they're, driven people are attracted to them.

Interview, Council/Local Government Officer 2

The team that was created here were employed for their sense of understanding, their own personality, their own outlook, their confidence in dealing with people.

Interview, NDC Officer 4

Brokers were recognised as understanding and promoting participation because many of them had a community development background or a belief in those values:

With [NDC] officers I think yes there is, there is a, a vast difference between those who really believe in it and, and will push to have every meeting have an evening meeting and be as inclusive as possible. And those who either want somebody else to do it or want quick fix solution. And I think it depends where your background is, where you're coming from.

Interview, NDC Officer 3

Public service employees were less likely to become part of networks through self selection as it was often required in their job, but some engaged more enthusiastically or to a greater degree and were notably more responsive to residents:

There was that many complaints about the environment and about dirty streets and, and like I say there's grime and crime go hand in hand. They actually put a chap called [name] in and he worked wonders. As soon as he come in we had contact with him. "[name], did you know this is happening?" "I'll go out and I'll have a look". And it got dealt with.

Interview, Resident 1

Fieldnotes, Local Meeting May 2007

After discussing a local crime problem, residents say that they don't want police to go back to how they were, or there will be chaos. Residents are worried about disarray because there is a lot of staff changeover in the police. They mention that it is a shame one police officer who worked well is leaving; he acted on what was said at the meetings.

Residents who were brokers tended to take wider community perspectives compared to other residents (as mentioned in the previous chapter) and to have had a history of community service or involvement. Effective brokers in public services also tended to have a wider perspective than their peers, a common ability to see beyond their own institutional boundaries:

If you do have somebody that isn't customer focused, they're not going to, you know, they're just going to perceive it to be kind of a bit of a pain really, aren't they? Having to deal with something that Mrs Bloggs at the end of a particular street, or about a bin not being emptied or whatever it happens to be, it just, you know, it's not seen to be a priority and it won't get dealt with.

Interview, NDC Officer 2

It's someone who sees the bigger picture. Who is open enough and honest enough to realize that their service is not perfect and is willing to challenge and change their service. It's someone who is willing and able to understand, willing to actually work outside the silo of their particular service and to see how their service impacts on others. And someone who's just, who has that ability to get on with other people. Particularly with residents. I think each of those were very very effective at working with residents and understood where residents were coming from.

Interview, NDC Officer 1

Brokers in public services also had the ability to understand issues at an individual level and to be empathetic, but also had a commitment to working beyond normal office hours:

I think [residents] are looking for, empathy's the most important thing, that [public service employees] have got an ability to work ordinary people, residents, listen to resident... so that residents feel confident that at least that the people get the message... Secondly you've got to be competent, but usually in those regeneration areas you know, you get people who are driven, so they'll go beyond the er, you know, the 9 to 5 or the 8 to 6. They'll work the weekends, they'll work the evenings. They'll go above and beyond, areas you know, you get people who are driven, so they'll go beyond the er, you know, the 9 to 5 or the 8 to 6. They'll work the weekends, they'll work the evenings. They'll go above and beyond.

Interview, Council/Local Government Officer 2

You can have some fantastic people or you can get somebody who, how can I put this the right way, where you'll get somebody who works for an agency, some people are "This is my job, I work 9 till 5, finish at 5 o'clock, go home and that's

it" ... I think it's important that you get the kind of people who do, who are seen to have an interest, who care, or put in that effort to either get results. ... I think it's really important to have those people in those roles really, that are working face to face, is being seen to have an interest, to care, and be honest as well, you know.

Voluntary Sector Representative 6

6.2.2 Brokers as Bridges

Some actors in the NDC network acted as bridges between different groups, creating links and relationships. This was important early on in the programme especially, as residents did not trust public services and were cynical about regeneration:

*At first a lot of people were really sceptical, it wasn't just me ... they're going "Yeah, right, we've had this before [name]." Especially the old ones who've lived around here for eighty years were like "Yeah, we've seen all that ****". So yeah there was a bit of scepticism at first.*

Interview, Resident 5

The introduction of the NDC programme into the area created a significant opportunity to overcome the divide between sceptical residents and public agencies, as NDC officers built relationships with both. The NDC programme created bridges by bringing together various actors which met in various NDC-organised forums and meetings, and also in various local meetings linked to the local authority structures. However, contacts initiated in meetings sometimes expanded into less formal spaces outside of meetings and contact was maintained by telephone or face to face.

6.2.2.1 Active Resident Bridges

Active residents formed a bridge between public agencies and local residents, passing on information about local problems to public service employees and NDC officers in meetings, and also passing information about the NDC network to local residents. Even after the programme was established, some residents remained distant from NDC and from services, but used both local residents as a bridge to the NDC network and

decision making processes. In this way, non-involved residents, as long as they knew an active resident, had a link to governing processes in the local area.

Active residents also had direct contacts with many public service employees and often had access to telephone numbers for public service employees which they used:

Well public services now know that they are not a private entity if you like. That we've had the cleansing and highways people in and we've given them, to the point where they've actually given out numbers for the, what the general public don't get.

Interview, Resident 2

In some cases non-involved residents observed active residents phoning up services and receiving a response, and would ask for contact numbers so they could do the same thing:

And then they see it getting fixed, and it's a bit like "God that got done quick" and you go "Yeah". So they know to come to you, or "Can you give me that number that you use, that you get them jobs done?"

Interview, Resident 5

I get phone calls a lot from the elderly whose things are going wrong and, and they just want somebody to talk to. Somebody to tell them what number to phone and things like that.

Interview, Resident 11

There were various schemes in the area to formalise this brokering role of active residents for policing and environmental services, where a number of active residents would have regular contact with services to pass information to them, and to raise any concerns (East Manchester NDC, 2006a). This way of working was seen as taking meetings to people rather than asking people to come in for a meeting to exchange information. In this way, governance networks expanded beyond the realms of formal partnership and recognised groups, through informal and formal networking.

6.2.2.2 *Service Employee Bridges*

Local governance networks were also extended by interactions between residents and public service employees through direct phone and face to face contact, including literally on the street.

The two main types of ‘street’ staff were, firstly, wardens who were set up by NDC in 2002 as the result of an idea in one of the early task group meetings for a project which would improve the area. They were responsible for patrolling the local area for crime and environmental problems. The second group were the Street Environment Managers (SEMs). This project was initiated by the local authority in 2003 across Manchester. Their role was to improve the local environment by inspecting and pressuring services if there were problems, and to work with services to address problems such as graffiti, domestic and commercial waste, fly tipping, fly posting and unused land that was creating problems such as vandalism. The SEMs’ job was to “*take local ownership of their neighbourhood environment*” (Manchester City Council, 2005b: 2), responding to local needs by working with services and also enforcing standards on private companies and landlords using legislation, through fixed penalty notices for example. There were also public service employees working in parks, including park wardens, employed by the Leisure Department of the local authority.

These employees also had direct, street level contact with local residents because they were available to residents literally on their own streets, enabling face to face contact. This could also be seen as extending local governance networks out beyond meetings and formal governance spaces to peripheral spaces, the street level where any resident would be able to contact a public service, through the patrolling employees. These contacts enabled residents to participate in governing, albeit in a limit way, by communicating their aspirations to public services. The presence of public service employees on the street enabled direct contact, much of which was opportunistic.

Respondent: Yeah, I mean we have a website so they can email us with any problems if that's the need be, phone calls, we, we deliver and stuff and obviously we're on patrol.

Interviewer: Do people come up to you and talk to you?

Respondent: Oh yes, yes, certainly, yeah, they'll, they'll, they'll grab you straight away

Interviewer: And which, which, is there one of those ways that's more significant?

Respondent: Probably the, the pulling you in off the street. They do, I mean they phone the office regularly... but you are always stopped as you're walking around and you know, and people do talk to you, yeah.

Interview, Public Service Employee 1

Residents also tended to be quite confident approaching and communicating with public service employees in informal environments:

If you get out there and the residents are there on you, pounce on you, " Well I've got this and I've got that and..."

Interview, Public Service Employee 2

So I've even been grabbed, you know, I was away on holiday when two of the [group] caught me one day walking down the street! [laughs]. You know "Have we done this yet, where are we up to with that, can we come and have a look at it?" You know, they're very very proactive some of the [groups] in East Manchester. You know, they've actually chased me down the road on holiday! [laughs]

Interview, Public Service Manager 3

Peripheral governance spaces were also sometimes created from contacts made in formal meetings, through face-to-face contact and residents acquiring direct contact details for individuals, which enabled future contact to take place outside of meetings:

Normally, if I attend a residents meeting and being brave I put my card on the table and "There's my number" I have put my business card on tables and chairs and secretaries of residents groups do have my number and they'll tend to phone me if there's a problem.

Interview, Public Service Manager 7

[Public service employee] has been out to all the [resident group] meetings that the [resident group] that felt they had issues with the condition of the parks... And

he's given his personal mobile number out to quite a lot of them, saying "Well, you know, you tell me if this is not being done on that day when it should have been done, you ring me, and I'll get it sorted"

Interview, Public Service Employee 5

Some local service employees had close contacts with local residents and would attempt to create bridges between residents and other local services who could respond more directly to residents' aspirations:

Respondent: It was like "Oh well we'll phone the [environmental service] cos the [environmental service] will get it removed and, and, but we used to always say to the people " Well this is the phone number", give them the information to phone the number, "This is where you get a new bin" um "These people can do this for you" you know, so you need to channel that to them, you know, "These people will do this for you". [Mentions other environmental services], you know, "These are the people that you can talk to do that, and they'll do it for you so you don't have to necessarily always, we will report it for you but there's the information for, for future reference"

Interviewer: So now people do that themselves do they?

Respondent: Some do. Some do. Some don't, some still come through us you know. I would say it's the elderly more that still keep in contact with us because we've built a good working relationship up with them so I would say the elderly come through us a lot more.

Interview, Public Service Employee 1

The locality of staff being on patrol or being based in nearby, local offices where staff were immediately available was important for building contacts:

So, and you know, the residents wanted us to be, so you're on your area, you're in your area so you can be proactive all the time. So if you were based at the Town Hall, it would just be a nightmare having to race backwards and forwards, whereas here a resident can ring up and you can be with them in a matter of minutes.

Interview, Public Service Employee 2

Contact by telephone was also quite important as it enabled fast, direct communication with a known person in a public service, in contrast to residents' previous experiences where they had been passed around by different disinterested council departments, and also prompted a good response from services:

All the residents, or all the [group members] have all got my mobile number and the landline number, and quite often they're in touch with me with any issues they have.

Interview, Public Service Employee 6

Speaking to a known contact in a service also made residents more confident when they phoned services:

People have got much more... what's the word I'm looking for? Confident in themselves, that they can pick the phone up and get on to people that they know.

Interview, Resident

Respondent: Everybody has their [public services] number so they can phone them up which they didn't do before. But they do now.

Interviewer: Is that just about having the number or is it about having the confidence or....

Respondent: It's having the confidence and the right information. If somebody just gives you a telephone number and you don't know who to ask for you're going to be, you're going to give up on the phone. Cos you must know, you phone up an agency, any of ours and you'll get, the first, the first one on the phone will say "Well they're not here at the moment, can I, what is it you need?" and you tell them and they go "I can't help you, you need that person you're ringing for". You think "For crying out loud". So, the right name, the right telephone number, the information you need, that is, I don't like the word empowerment, but I think the capacity, the capacity building of the community.

Interview, Resident 4

By contrast, services often preferred central numbers since they were easier for administrative purposes but residents were able to get around this by finding out direct contact numbers and using them anyway:

Respondent: You've got 999, and then you've got 852 5050. That's sends you to the central answering service, and then they put you through to the different areas. And that goes to mobile officers. So some of the police will say 'You've got to phone 5050 cos that's the way it gets logged'. But what is, the general public don't realise is that if they phone the area station, they can create a log. The police don't tell them that. I do. I say "When you phone up and they say that, you say 'no you can create a log, you can do it from there', and they'll 'go um right, um right' and they'll do it"

Interviewer: And if the resident takes that route they're more likely to get some kind of satisfaction are they?

Respondent: They're more likely to get a bobby to come and talk to them and find out exactly what is going on. I had an area police officer second to none who made sure that I met everybody, his colleagues, that I'd know them by name, so that if he wasn't there, there was always somebody there you could talk to.

Interview, Resident 1

There were therefore multiple service employees and NDC officers to contact, through various means, something residents used strategically:

I think the residents within the New Deal area know, things like the Residents Forum, know very well how the system operates so they've got a, they're very clear on "Well actually if I want, if I want something like that to happen I need to go and talk to de, de de" and they know where to put the pressure on, they know who to talk to.

Interview, Voluntary Sector Representative 4

6.2.2.3 NDC Bridges

NDC officers brokered relationships between residents and services; this was significant in the early days of the NDC programme where NDC officers managed to overcome initial distrust from local residents. NDC officers took relationship building seriously and as a central aspect of their work:

Actually a lot of it [NDC's community engagement approach] is about forming relationships and developing trust with the local people.... I think it's an absolutely critical thing in terms of where we've got to and how we've got there.

Interview, NDC Officer 1

Despite being associated with the local authority, NDC officers managed to build up relationships with those residents who became active in the NDC programme and this initial brokering laid the foundation for the NDC network as it linked key residents to the public agencies in the area. NDC's approach was to create a personal and friendly environment:

Creating a sense of feeling within the office that this was a place that you could come, where you felt that you weren't going into a council office.

Interview, NDC Officer 4

You can picture NDC being a small little house where everybody's welcome and things are talked about and you can see any agency and they'll sit down and chat with you.

Interview, Resident 11

One important aspect of creating a friendly environment was to have an open door policy, literally, where residents could enter the building (which was located in the East Manchester NDC area, not the Town Hall in central Manchester two or three miles away) and talk to any staff, about regeneration, local issues or problems they were having:

NDC has an open door policy which it's always had where you can just go in and ask to see whoever.

Interview, Resident 2

It was that kind of "Come in and we'll have a brew" approach rather than you come in and see us at a particular time.

Interview, NDC Officer 2

NDC's 'friendly' approach and the trust it engendered was highlighted when NDC began to merge with New East Manchester which was located in the same building. New East Manchester was a less resident-friendly organisation and changes in the building were observed by residents:

Fieldnotes, NDC Meeting July 2007

The resident comments that in NDC offices residents can come in and talk to people. NDC officers introduce themselves to people. With New East Manchester, people don't know who the officers are. A further discussion follows about how resident comments are not recorded in the minutes of New East Manchester meetings, whereas NDC has been successful because local people are involved and NDC is friendly. Residents "Don't want to see any change". The discussion then goes back to how residents' experience of New East Manchester is "Like walking into a fridge", compared to NDC who would help with things like gas bills and putting elderly people in touch with the right agencies to help them.

This issue was exemplified by concerns raised when the entrance doors on the NEM/NDC building were changed around and ways of greeting resident visitors also changed. This was far from a trivial issue as it was associated with a change from a more personal relationship to a more official one damaged levels of trust and communication between residents and NDC:

Respondent: A lot of the people who actually worked for New East Manchester kind of thought they were a class apart from the rest. Even though they shared the same building. The difference if you went in through the doors that East Manchester used to have as the entrance, to going in through the New Deals door, you could feel the difference straight away. And even now there's a change, there's, that has already been a change because they've moved everybody to share the main door and you've got the little, that reception desk which was never there before. You just used the counter side. And sometimes if, the longer-standing people like me are used to just waltzing in there. And sometimes if there's someone on the desk who you don't know and they don't know and then they kind of become slightly officious and they want to know who you are and who you want to see. Well we've never had that before.

Interviewer: And what's the benefit, I mean what would be the change if you don't have that open door policy? How would that affect you?

Respondent: Well in one way it starts to arouse your suspicions doesn't it, about what's going on, what they're not telling you. Or perhaps they're only telling you what they want you to know. If anyone's had a problem, right from the top ... down to whoever's the lowest in the pecking order, you've been able to walk in there and if the person you needed to see wasn't available there was always somebody you could speak to who would listen and try and help you. Now New East Manchester's set up is slightly different, because theirs is a specific thing, isn't it, to do with the wider regeneration and it's kind of business orientated. More than personal-orientated, if you understand what I mean.

Interview, Resident 2

Staff was trained that, you know, when a residents comes in, in order to be made welcome and offered a cup of tea and things like that, and sat down and talked to, and then that person would then go and find whoever it was that they needed to speak to, and if it wasn't then they'd make them an appointment at somewhere outside or ... Everything was in touching distance, the CAB was over the road, the credit union was over the road. Everything was like a little village, if you like, and everybody knew everybody. Now it's becoming a building that nobody wants to go into. That it's got that council stamp on it, you know, you go in, you sit down, they try and get you the person that you need to speak to but that person isn't in so "Oh dear, never mind". You know. It wasn't like that, it really wasn't like that.

Interview, Resident 11

The early open door policy had enabled NDC build a good relationship with residents, and officers also made an effort to be available and responsive even if residents' issues were outside their remit and a 'resident resource' room was available in the NDC building. This relationship-building formed a base on which NDC could then broker relations with public services and acting as a bridge between residents and public services, facilitating contact and communication between them:

Interviewer: Do you have those contacts within the services?

Respondent: Yes, we've got them plastered all over the place. And once again, anybody that doesn't really know, should know. Because NDC are excellent at that information.

Interviewer: They provided you with the contacts?

Respondent: Yes, they're all there. All there, all the time.

Interview, Resident 6

The residents who are involved will, some of them will go to the police but some of them won't speak to the police. I know residents that have mobile phones and will speak to inspectors, but I think for the most part it's quite easy, as it stands now, for an irate resident to know they can walk into the NDC office and "Can anybody help me?" and staff there will be able to point them to the right person. They know who to speak to and where to go. And what the residents I know anyway, have a good working relationship with many of them, the officers down there.

Interview, Voluntary Sector Representative 6

6.2.3 Brokering Functions

The brokers in the NDC network not only created links, opening up communication channels between different groups and individuals but operated in certain ways which affected participation processes.

6.2.3.1 NDC as a Broker

NDC was a significant broker, particularly in its position as an arm's length agency of the city council, which had useful links with services and the local authority. Although the programme overall did not have strong connections with city-level structures, a small number of connections between individuals were useful in implementing NDC's agenda:

Interviewer: And because you're in the Chief Exec's office, do you still have a good connection to the people there?

Respondent: Yes. Which makes a huge difference. Having [council officer], given his role has enabled us to unblock issues that might arise. Some of the people we had in terms of public agencies, we had senior people from the health PCT, from the police and from job centre plus. Three individuals that I can think of who were very very effective in terms of seeing what NDC was about and helping challenge and change things and using us to help challenge and change things.

Interviewer: That's quite interesting because that seems to be true whatever level...

Respondent: Yep. It's about individuals and about relationships. Absolutely fundamental.

Interview, NDC Officer 1

NDC also acted as a broker in various ways directly between residents and public services to support the processes of resident participation. Because NDC created a physical space within its building where residents would come in and communicate with people who would listen and help, they acted as a conduit for information:

We're not, you know, we're not set up as a one stop shop as such, but people will come here first. So I think, you know, there's still a tradition of people doing that.

Interview, NDC Officer 3

NDC officers, because of their links to local services and the local authority, were able to pass on information to residents that they would normally have had difficulty accessing:

You've got this chain, and the chain goes up through NDC, and when NDC goes I don't know if we'll have the chain any more.

Interview, Resident 3

It's could you see a result to your question, it's not like I've got to ring twenty five times before somebody's going to do something about this. And then you get a different person every time and then they go "Yeah, can you explain your details?" and you just think "Oh, just go away". Cos you have got that port of contact like with the regeneration, our port of contact would be [NDC Officer].

Interview, Resident 5

NDC officers also acted as conciliators on some occasions where there was conflict between residents and services. NDC's close relationship with local residents meant that they were often the first contact residents would make if they were unhappy with something, and would therefore act as a buffer between residents' anger and public service annoyance, bridging the cultural divides discussed in Chapter Five:

And there's lots of residents that if they're not happy about something, you'd better believe you'll know about it. They'll be tromping into see [NDC Officer] first thing in the morning, I've seen that happen.

Interview, Voluntary Sector Representative 6

[Name], he headed up operational services in this area, you know. So he'd come in and go "I've had bloody [name of resident] moaning on about that" and I'd go "Oh come on, he's only going, he only wants a sign for this that or the other". They go "Right" you know, so those kind of relationships, yes, we've helped there.

Interview, NDC Officer 4

NDC officers also acted as conciliators in meetings between residents and services. Sometimes during discussions a pointed question from a resident would lead to a disagreement which then resulted in a stalemate; the NDC officer would then make a suggestion about a way to resolve it. NDC officers also advocated for residents, using their status and brokering relationships to make sure services attended meetings and gave adequate responses to resident requests:

If a certain issue came up [in a meeting] [NDC Officer] would say "Well look, I agree with that, that's a point I'll raise outside of this meeting with the management group that run that particular business" and then [NDC Officer] might seek advice from elsewhere, bring somebody else in, and then just try and get that matter resolved. And then that would take the sting out of the meeting as such. And then that person would see a result, or not a result, but nine times out of ten they would change.

Interview, Resident 8

Interviewer: So when you're faced with services who don't respond, how do you try and overcome that?

Respondent: Well we take it through the Beacons, we use [NDC Officer] really, and he expresses in writing, you know, the unhappiness that is going on. And [name] is quite a powerful man really because he's got the council's backing.

Interview, Resident 1

This role sometimes put NDC officers in a difficult position between the city council or services and residents:

And I think actually the tension comes from having lots of managers if you like, of who you're answerable to because you've got your board, you've got your manager or your managers, that are you know direct line managers, you've got residents who want, who, you know, putting pressure on and things, then you've got councillors, and you can end up kind of going between all of them and getting pulled in lots of directions. And it, it's quite a tough call but it's, it's kind of something that I've always experienced, so you've just got to take a judgement on it really.

Interview, NDC Officer 3

NDC's role communicating, conciliating and advocating for residents remained, even though they had built links between residents and local public services, encouraging more direct contact. NDC was used out of habit or because residents had tried but failed to get an adequate response from public services and needed a more powerful advocate to act on their behalf:

As far as the council's concerned I think there is more direct contact [from residents]. But it's, but it's, you know we're still here as that safety net aren't we, to overcome those barriers.... I think [services are] quite good but only because we're chasing them up and driving them to do that.

Interview, NDC Officer 2

So New Deals still act as a channel for getting information, either from those groups through to that individual, or to gee up somebody and say "Right, there's something that needs doing about this, this is a contact number for that person [resident], and you'd better go and try and sort him out".

Interview, Resident 8

There was some concern about the dependency of residents on NDC to fulfil this function as it was a temporary programme and there was a consciousness that residents needed to be prepared for when NDC was no longer operating:

Respondent: I think that what residents would probably feel is that they know more people in more agencies that they can approach directly.

Interviewer: Is that important to them?

Respondent: I think for resident activists yes because in the past everything would have been done through [NDC Officer] and [the] small team so any and every problem, and there's still an element of dependency culture that we're trying to wean off.

Interview, Council/Local Government Officer 2

6.2.3.2 Residents as Brokers

Activist residents also acted as brokers to the wider residents by passing information between local meetings they attended and non-involved residents, often through Residents' Association or Friends of Parks groups but also informally between neighbours. This kept a wider body of residents informed about local decision making. Personal contacts between residents were important for receiving information: local surveys conducted in East Manchester in 2002 and 2005 by Kwest consultants found that word of mouth, the local newspaper and newsletters were by far the most common ways people received information about the local area rather than directly with public agencies or NDC. Local residents sometimes also made complaints or requests to local groups via an activist resident, rather than attend themselves. Active residents therefore bridged the worlds of the formal governance networks and informal, peripheral governance spaces, enabling non-involved residents to have some participation in local governing processes, albeit in a very limited way.

Many local residents were reluctant to become involved in local community activities, even if they directly benefitted, and would rely on an active residents to act on their behalf instead:

I'm probably more proactive than some of the other residents. The other residents are interested but they more want a person to feedback to them, so I go "Hang on right, this is to do with you now, I know that's the bigger stuff, but that's to do with you"... and it will be a bit like

"Oh [respondent's name] will know that". Sometimes they can be quite minor things. They're not normally, but bigger things like what's going on at the stadium, they won't ask me things like that. But they might

"Why's this not happened that was supposed to be happening?" They're more interested in their really, their small community.

Interview, Resident 5

Active residents provided contacts and information for non-involved residents, as well as acting on their behalf by communicating with services for them:

It's surprising how many people tell you what's going on, because you know who you are and where your position is, as [local group], the people on the next estate who had a tenants association that they weren't very confident in, would tell me things about crime and I would pass it on. And they'd say

"It won't get back to me, will it?" I went

"No, not unless you give me permission to put them in touch with you I won't, I'll just pass it on. Once I've passed it on that's it, I've done my coordination job, that's all I'm here for." At other times like, I phoned another rep and the other rep was then ranting at me about what was going on in her area. And I said

"Well have you contacted such and such? Well I've had a meeting with them, and I'll give you the phone number". It's about we all pass on the information to each other anyway. It's not a formal thing.

Interview, Resident 1

You'll always get people saying "Oh so and so's, you don't mind me ringing you? So and so's give me your number, because you've done so and so for so and so". And you know, so you get a reputation, you get a good reputation, it's word of mouth basically.

Interview, Public Service Employee 2

As with NDC however, they sometimes relied on the active resident broker to make sure services responded adequately:

There's always something going on in the field whether it's drunken kids or the bikes running round. And non-stop. [The residents] used to be at the door:

"There's a bike going round the field, what can we do about it?"

"There's a telephone number go and phone up, ask them to have a look and they'll contact the police for you"

"Oh!"

And off they go. Then I go and find out if, if I were coming to the resident forum I'd go back out and say,

"Did you actually get any result when you phoned?"

And they'll tell me. And if they had any problems then I'd bring it up at that meeting and say,

"Well you didn't really do what you're supposed to do, you should have done this really".

Interview, Resident 11

Not all residents necessarily knew an activist resident however; it was a matter of luck whether residents lived near or knew an activist and often if that individual left the area the other residents had no one else to advocate or communicate for them. Some active residents were key members of local groups, which would collapse if the resident left or moved:

Fieldnotes, NDC Meeting April 2007

A discussion starts about how to address problems in one park which is being neglected. A service representative suggests using the Community Guardians Scheme to help with maintaining standards. One residents says "We've been there before" while another resident comments that it is a good ideas but "If a good person leaves it all falls down".

6.2.3.3 *Service Staff as Brokers*

Sympathetic individuals in public service agencies also performed important broker functions in the NDC and wider governance network. There was more scope for brokering where services had employed more ground level staff, providing an opportunity for direct contact with residents. Service employees on the ground often acted as a first point of contact for residents and would link them to other services:

People know we can, now, they can come to us for basically anything and if we can't do it we can steer them in the right direction of, so they know, they know that.... I'll point them in the right direction. So I personally think my job is like middleman.

Interview, Public Service Employee 3

There's a port of contact where you can go. Neighbourhood Nuisance, the wardens. There's enough bodies there that you can contact and just say "Look, I'm having real trouble with this, could you just have a quiet word or send a letter?"

Interview, Resident 5

Often these contacts in peripheral governance spaces tended to be more informal, which worked well for residents as greater physical distance from institutional environments made communication easier and they were often near the physical sites of problems where both parties could see the problem.

6.2.4 **Summary**

Particular individuals fulfilled roles in the NDC network acting as brokers. Often actors in networks are referred to in terms of which group or organisational background they are from, particularly so with institutional approaches. Public services and community did not come together as entire groups; there were particular points of contact through individuals. Furthermore, relationships were built with these individuals, not with organisations, and if individuals left the link would not necessarily remain.

Much of the dynamics of the processes of governing within the NDC network occurred through individuals with characteristics of community spirit, empathy and conscientiousness, rather than through formal structures of participation, although these formed the basis often for the relationships to form. Those individuals who brokered relationships and advocated for residents tended to be the same individuals, and often were attracted to NDC because of these roles. These individuals created bridges between residents and public services and built relationships between them, often also creating further ties.

Brokers acted in a variety of ways to facilitate communication between individuals and this was used by residents for influencing public services, through NDC conciliating or advocating on their behalf for example. NDC officers were particularly important brokers since there had been distrust and lack of communication between residents and local public sector organisations. Direct contact with services also improved communication with residents. Through this, the role of brokers and their ability to exercise discretion enabled greater responsiveness of services to local residents.

6.3 *Network Ties*

The introduction of NDC into the case study area created a local governance network made up of individuals, many of whom acted as brokers. These brokers acted in certain ways which facilitated resident communication with and influence over public services. A significant aspect of resident influence was the development of relationships between brokers in the network, referred to here as ‘network ties’. This section examines the ties between these individuals and how these changed over time. More personal aspects of relationships, or strong ties, developed from face-to-face contact in meetings and in peripheral governance spaces, which led to increased familiarity, understanding and accountability, and reduced conflict. These relationships between residents, public service employees and NDC officers were not unambiguous; there were still tensions, for example when residents felt their aspirations were not being met.

6.3.1 Face-to-Face Contact

Attendance at meetings introduced face-to-face contact between residents and public services and, coupled with increased everyday interactions between residents and local public service employees, began to change the nature of ties. NDC created more opportunities for face-to-face contact which built familiarity:

I think New Deals was like the ones that brought it into focus because the police then had their own meetings in New Deals offices and residents were invited to go.... And it's good that you can go to meetings like that where you can, face to face with the police, with the sergeants, with the officers, and actually talk to them instead of on the phone. You know, you can put a face to the voice and you can talk to them.

Interview, Resident 7

I think that's one of the beauties, we've got contacts now. You build up the contacts and when you phone they'll go "Oh, how are you doing?" because we've met somewhere at some meeting or other.

Interview, Resident 1

Having to meet with residents face-to-face was an abrupt culture change for most public agencies and required some adaptation:

I think it was a shock to a lot of the agencies at the beginning, because they'd never, ever had to sit round a table and the residents actually say what they wanted to say to them. You could write to them, you could phone them, you'd never met them face to face, they wouldn't come out of their offices. What New Deals did was make people come to us as residents, to, you know "Oh, this isn't working". "Right, well we'll invite them so you can have your point of view". And that's how, that's how we worked with all the agencies.

Interview, Resident 1

Although face-to-face contact was difficult for some public service employees, it created opportunities for changed relationships, increased communication and more assistance from services for residents:

When somebody attends the meetings for the first time, they don't know you, you don't know them, they're feeling their way in the board meeting and then if they're asked a specific question, they kind of, they're on edge really, you can see it in their faces... they relax, then you find they're more, when they're more relaxed you can get more out of them [laughs]. You can, you can say things, you can probably say things to them once they've got their feet in and feel comfortable, you can say things to them that you probably would have held back because you don't want to make them feel embarrassed or uncomfortable.... Also you can take them to one side after the meeting and say "Can I just have a word?" and things like that, you know. And if they can't help you they'll usually put you onto someone who can.

Interview, Resident 2

I think it's about getting people together. A lot of agencies didn't actually take notice of individuals. It's very hard for them to sit up and take notice. But what has happened since [NDC] is that we've got faces to names. You see names on the top of letterheads. With the [NDC] programme you actually meet the people concerned and they get to know you. So there's a rapport there already that you build up and build up.

Interview, Resident 1

Face-to-face contact was also welcomed by some public service employees who thought it made communication easier:

If you had a problem it was always I don't like speaking down the phone to somebody, I'd rather be face to face and then you can, you get a feel of them about what they feel, down the phone I, plus it's a bit more personal then if it's face to face.

Interview, Public Service Employee 3

6.3.2 Personal Aspects to Network Ties

Local meetings had a role in the operation of local governance networks as they were the original place of contact for many of the relationships between residents and public

service representatives, and network ties were overlaid on the formal institutional arrangements because of this. However, contacts between individuals were also often enacted in the informal spaces of governance, not at meetings but on the street, in person in the NDC building or through telephone calls. Relationships developing in informal environments took on a different aspect when they were not constrained by formal meeting cultures. These informal spaces were less dominated by public service cultures which allowed personal aspects of relationships to develop. Personal aspects were important in building relationships as this element changed over time, leading to the building of strong ties:

...community engagement isn't about just holding an event or talking to someone about something or telling someone something, it's an ongoing relationship building isn't it?

Interview, NDC Officer 5

And I think before NDC, the only contact people had had with the council for the most part was the town hall, which had not always been a positive one....They had to change with the way they perhaps dealt with things. I mean very, very early on, there were some complaints about staff not being able to speak to local people, they weren't very interested, they weren't very helpful. They had meetings where that's been raised as well, because this was the early days, but people got, you've got those staff got to know a lot of people, got to understand the way they work, and kind of made friends with them as well. It broke a lot of barriers down.

Interview, Voluntary Sector Representative 6

NDC officers were specific and purposeful about creating strong ties in order to create the NDC network:

We'd go out and do karaoke nights together. This was about the importance of officers understanding that you weren't just here doing a job work, you was here doing a job of work alongside partners that you know, and you had kind of reinforce that partnership by socialising with people. So, and it sounds really really simple, but it worked. We created that partnership sense because of the very simple things like that.

Interview, NDC Officer 4

The more personal nature of relationships was reflected in the overlapping of professional and personal lives. For example public sector employees would be invited into homes for tea and NDC officers had been invited to residents' parties. These relationships developed in some cases to where council or regeneration officers were seen not just as professionals but in a more personal capacity:

[Mentions local resident] ... we get on really well and stuff and she, you know, even, even outside of work she asked me last week if I could fix her computer. So I went and did it. I don't just, I personally don't, because I'm aware of a relationship with [another resident], because he's the kind of the person that really got me into the idea of how [resident groups] can work and what they can do and what they can achieve because there's... I kind of, I kind of, you become more like friends as much as, as much as anything else you know. Cos they used to go like call me tearound, when I was going to [local park] and I'd go to [local resident's house], I'd go to [another residents house]. Because we'd sit down and talk about the parks and it would be a nice kind of friendly atmosphere and stuff.

Interview, Public Service Employee 5

And I mean they're almost friends now. I mean, we go to social events of theirs, they come to social events of us. So although they still do a job and we go to the meetings and whatnot, we still meet on a social level....Because we've been involved with New Deals, we go out on their Christmas do's. Uptown or whatever. So we see them socially as well as for what they're there to do at work. So as I say it's a very friendly atmosphere. And obviously it's all first name terms as well, but obviously we still, when we're dealing with other members of the council, it's Mr So and So. At the moment, it's just "Hi [NDC Officer's first name]" "Can I speak to [NDC Officer's first name], it's me, blah blah". If he's available "Yeah".

Interview, Resident 8

Some service employees were specific about regarding these strong ties as being more than working relationships, and were concerned that the personal aspects of them were not merely used by residents for utilitarian reasons:

Respondent: You build up a relationship with them as well. It's like, not just "Oh he's a [job title] and that's Mrs So and So". It's [name] and like [name], on the estate. You've seen how I was with [name]. It's like friends. Not just [job title] and resident. So

Interviewer: Is that important?

Respondent: Yeah, to me it is anyway.

Interviewer: Why, why is that?

Respondent: Because I don't like to feel as though they'll just talk to me when they want something doing. Where [name] or [name] will shout at you "Come and have a drink, come and have, any time you want".

Interview, Public Service Employee 1

Some public agency employees did express limitations about how far the personal aspects of relationships extended as they were aware of their professional roles and potential conflicts:

We do go out and socialise with residents but, for example, I wouldn't drink when I was out, even if it was a social night out because I'm always just aware of my role as an officer.... You've just got to always remember that you've got the city council, the city council's hat on.

Interview, NDC Officer 2

I think we, you know, we do, we keep things to professional. However, it's nice to build up that friendly, where they can come up to me and say "Hello [name] how are you?" and "Have you had a good weekend?" and I can say to them "Oh it's fine [name], you know, I've had a great weekend and how are you?" And it's, it's good that you're, you know, that you build up a, a good friendly working relationship but, that obviously you know you're a professional.

Interview, Public Service Employee 1

One public service manager also mentioned that he wanted his staff to be carrying out jobs in the local area and not just socialising with residents.

6.3.3 Increased Understanding

While services had different perspectives about some problems in the area, and had different timescales, as mentioned in the previous chapter, greater contact, communication and strong ties increased the understanding of different groups of each other and helped people see issues from the point of view of others who had a different social or organisational context:

They had to change with the way they perhaps dealt with things. I mean, very very early on, there were some complaints about staff not being able to speak to local people, they weren't very interested, they weren't very helpful. They had meetings where that's been raised as well, because this was the early days, but people got, you've got those staff got to know a lot of people, got to understand how the way they work, and kind of made friends with them as well. It broke a lot of barriers down.

Interview, Voluntary Sector Representative 6

But I still do think, you know, you get quite a lot of people [public service employees] that, that there's kind of a line, that Manchester residents or service users or whatever, that they're not real people. And then there's the ones that do recognise that these are issues that are affecting people's lives and if you don't tackle them it can be quite detrimental to people's lives as well, so I think it's just, it's just having that understanding that thing that you've got to work in a community probably to have that understanding, or at least have some face to face contact with residents at some point.

Interview, NDC Officer 2

NDC's overall approach to brokering was based on relationship-building in order to understand people:

I, at the end of the day we all work better in terms of if we get on well with people and we understand people. And we have a strong relationship with people. And I think that's, it is just human nature. And whether that's with residents, with other officers from within the programme or with public agents, it's about getting to know what, where people's values are, where they're coming from and people's

judgements. How people behave. I think it's just understanding all of those things to form a relationship and to, to just do business with people, you do business in terms with different people in different ways, understanding how they operate. And I just think forming a relationship helps you to understand how people operate and there are some people that, like minded people, that you'll have a much stronger relationship with who you can actually work better with as a direct result of that relationship. And again that's not just public agencies that's with residents as well.

Interview, NDC Officer 1

Additionally, services' location in the area, through having local offices or local patrols, was thought by both residents and staff to bring a greater awareness and understanding of local problems to public service employees:

What I tend to do is work one to one with agencies. If, I mean I'm having trouble now because the streets aren't being swept, so I'm asking for an inspection...I'll find out who I can contact and I will email them and ask for an inspection on the estate. That person will come down, we'll walk round the estate with a few of the residents.

Interview, Resident 1

They get it [green space] because they've seen it. That's why I normally invite people down, to look at it while they're discussing it, cos they get it then, they understand it more. They have more of an interest because it's more personal to them. If you're talking to them one on one it becomes more meaningful than talking over a phone, and not having ever met them and you know. And you have the indifference of not just them but me as well. I can be rude because I'll never have to meet them again, they can be rude because they'll never have to meet me again. They've got standards and won't be spoken to like that, I've got standards and won't be 'shoddy', and so it doesn't create that one on one relationship, it really really, I've found that really important.

Interview, Resident 5

This increased understanding was the basis for changing working relationships between residents and public services, and for increasing the likelihood of services responding to

resident aspirations. One limitation, however, was often understanding was gained by an individual in a service rather than by the organisation, and staff turnover meant this knowledge and understanding could be lost quite easily.

6.3.4 Building Trust

Familiarity and face-to-face contact also increased trust between actors over time:

People don't trust people they've never met, to a degree. If you can't put a name to a face or a post to a face then people tend to be more suspicious of it. I think you should always meet, I wouldn't say meet them all the time because you'd never do anything but meet but people should meet, should know who to speak to.

Interview, Public Service Manager 3

The building of strong ties, responsiveness, honesty and trust tended to occur together:

If you put me in, in a position where I go into a room with 20 strangers I'm on edge and I'm thinking "Christ what am I doing here, I'm, you know, this is..." And I think a lot of people, you take them out of their environment a lot of people are like that. But if you go into a room where you're going to know a lot of people, you're sat around, you have a cup of tea with them and then the questions are, don't get, the questions can be awkward and it, and it can get heated at times because people want the sea change, they want to see the area getting better, they want, otherwise they wouldn't be there. So, but with regard to it being you know, it's good, you've got to have a good working relationship with your residents because ...you're going to go there and you're going to know, "Listen I can't do that for you but I'll get back to you and I will get back to you". And then the residents trust, know you, they say "That [name] is alright, he will get back to me with that question". So they, they go away from the meeting knowing that, alright no they haven't got the answer they went there for but they've gone, because they know me, I've been a couple of times, I've spoke to them, I've said "hello, blah blah blah, I'll get back to them". And it may be that I don't wait till the next

meeting to get back to them, I get back to them the next day when I've got the answer for them. So that, you know, friendship and trust goes, you know, it goes hand in hand.

Interview, Public Service Employee 1

However, face-to-face contact was not sufficient for residents to trust public services. Actually delivering what residents wanted was the predominant factor in building trust:

Fieldnotes, Environmental Patrol August 2007

A resident explains that the benefit of communicating more with environmental services through the employee who patrols in their area is that things get done, and this makes residents trust services. This is a "big thing" for residents. Because things get done "It puts the faith back in".

People weren't used to actually having officers who made promises and delivered on them. And I think we've delivered on what we said and I think that made a huge difference. Once you can actually demonstrate that actually you are listening and will do as you say, that made a huge difference in terms of breaking down barriers... And it takes time to actually get to form that relationship and to make them realise is that actually we are going to have a real say in this and they are going to listen to us. ... actually listening to people what they said they wanted and saying "Right we'll deliver it" made a huge difference in terms of people to think "Actually they are listening to us, they are taking us seriously and we are part of this".

Interview, NDC Officer 1

Closer relationships with public services did seem to improve satisfaction with services, even if resident aspirations for actual service delivery were not met. While trust was a feature of these networks then, it was more significant as a result of the governing process rather than as part of the process.

6.3.5 Assertiveness and Reduced Conflict

The previous chapter discussed increased resident assertiveness within the context of initial conflict and later improved relationships with public agencies. While the public sector culture of consensus rather than conflict was partly responsible for reduced hostility between residents and public agencies, the changed relationships between individual actors were also a key factor in bringing about this change. Changed relationships in meetings resulted in a reduction in the original resident hostility that residents felt towards local services:

Fieldnotes, NDC Meeting January 2007

Outside, after meeting, four residents are standing outside the building. Two are smoking. They ask me what I thought of the meeting and I reply I had enjoyed it and found it interesting. One of them says the meetings didn't used to be like that, but that there wasn't any conflict now, and that there was a sense that the group gets things done, that the NDC team staff were very good.

Residents remained assertive in communicating with NDC officers and service employees however, and while relationships improved they maintained a focus on what they wanted for their area:

When they [NDC] are wrong you should expect that we will also voice an opinion and let it be known. And sometimes they don't like me to tell them that.

Interview, Resident 6

But I think the best residents nevertheless work constructively with the people there, making contact with professional links they come in with but nevertheless don't forget the reason they came in the first place.

Interview, Voluntary Sector Representative 2

Early hostility was treated as a subject for humour later on in the programme:

Fieldnotes, Local Meeting August 2007

A police officer talks about reduced crime in one area, including a drop in drug related crime. Just after he finishes his statement, he says, "This is where I'm expecting to get shot down in flames." But there is silence. A resident asks if they will discuss her area next. The response from the police officer is "Yes [name], I know you're chomping at the bit to shoot me down!" The resident responds, laughing, "No I'm not!"

Fieldnotes, NDC Meeting July 2007

A resident comments that the NDC officer [present at the meeting] got lynched in the early days, "I miss those days" (laughs). He then comments that the NDC officer's hair went grey, and laughs again.

Humour was one way of maintaining good relationships but still retaining some level of assertiveness, whether in meetings or one-to-one contact:

Fieldnotes, NDC Meeting December 2007

A resident addresses a public service employee new to the meeting: "Thank you for coming. I know it wasn't what you were expecting". Another residents adds "And we were being tame this week!"

*It's knowing who you're talking to. There was a, we had a, I've been having a go at our new area [police] officer... he's the type of lad who would give you his mobile phone number, "If you need me, right". And he used to phone up and say what shift he was on, if he was going on he'd phone me. So this new one is an, he tells everybody I'm his son [laughs]. I mean, he's my son. And I have criticised him a lot because he's a desk bobby, and I said "I don't want a desk bobby, I want a bobby out, I want a bobby doing what they do". And if he's out, I'll say "What's up [name], are you lost, do you want to go home?" You know and I, and he'll say "You shouldn't keep talking to me like that" and I'll say "Well get off your **** and get out then!" [laughs]*

Interview, Resident 1

Changed relationships improved understanding and trust, but did not deter residents from being assertive with public services, though this tension was sometimes managed with humour.

6.3.6 Summary

This section has described the changing qualities of relationships, or strong ties, in the NDC network. Networks ties, especially in informal spaces, provided room for actors to overcome some of their institutional barriers. Face to face contact was important to building familiarity, and was facilitated by NDC and other local meetings. These ties become more personal in character often, and changes also led to improved understanding and trust. Initial hostility and conflict were reduced, although residents remained assertive.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed brokers and network ties within the NDC network in detail, exploring how individuals and their relationships contribute to processes that occur within the network and how residents' influence may operate in this context. The shape of the network was affected by the voluntary engagement of actors, particularly residents who engaged to a limited extent through 'active residents'. Environmental services created contacts with residents through informal, peripheral governance spaces as many of them were located on the street, through patrols for instance. NDC also functioned as an important broker between residents and services. Across the NDC network, particular individual actors played a positive role, especially when they functioned as bridging nodes and developed strong ties which improved service responsiveness to residents, overcoming institutional contexts and constraints.

Actors in networks are important to understand because whilst actors' motivations and drivers might be constrained in many institutional contexts, network governing is more ambiguous than hierarchical governing through organisations and gives more space to individuals to act with discretion. Actors' personal motivations and decisions therefore become more important in explaining governing compared to other governing modes.

Furthermore, the relationships between them become important for understanding participation and governing processes.

7 Findings: Service Changes in the NDC Network

7.1 Introduction

So far the findings chapters have described the structure of the NDC network and how it has opened up new spaces for resident participation through brokers and network ties. Having discussed the structure of and processes in the NDC network, this chapter addresses the final research objective which was to explore how public services changed in response to resident participation. This chapter explores the outcomes of resident participation with respect to the governing structures and processes described in the previous two chapters in order to fully address the question of whether and how residents were able to influence services.

The type of participation of interest to this study is instrumental participation, that is participation aimed at producing external change. In the context of the case study regeneration programme, one of the external changes residents were trying to bring about was improved local public services. The study has taken a ‘theory of change’ approach to data, exploring processes and outcomes together. So far, governing processes within the NDC network have been described, detailing institutional constraints but also describing how network brokers and ties contributed to resident influence over services. This chapter explores whether these processes could be said to have resulted in changes in services, and if so what changes.

The chapter first identifies what resident aspirations were, both at the beginning of the NDC programme in 1998/1999 and also what aspirations were in 2007. This is followed by an exploration of different processes of change through various routes, and how actors felt about these. Evidence for change in public services is then examined, followed by a discussion of network brokers and ties in the wider context of change in the case study and the limitations of network processes of change.

7.2 Resident Aspirations

This section describes the different aspirations residents of East Manchester had for their area in terms of: thematic priorities, aspirations for capital projects, better relationships with services and improved levels of services.

7.2.1 Crime, Grime and Housing

Resident aspirations at the beginning of the programme were largely for place-based changes such as improved housing, improvements to the local environment and reduced levels of crime:

The biggest thing in this area was it was so run down and neglected, that the parts up there where all those new properties are facing the old road, they were rows and rows of terraces that once featured in the national press as downtown Beirut, only it was downtown Beswick.... You were lucky if you saw the road swept once in a blue moon or, there was, the only time they did anything was when people banded together and kicked up a stink, and then you might get some pruning done on the bushes and the overhanging trees. They did road sweeping but they kept it to the main drag, they never went in the side roads of the estates and things like that. It wasn't very good... The parks had kind of been taken over by the yobbos. You couldn't let your children go and play.

Interview, Resident 2

There was crime going on all around, people vandalizing cars, throwing stones at your windows, every other property boarded up.

Interview, Resident 3

These are typically high priority concerns for deprived areas nationally, compared to lower interest in health, education and employment (Williams and Coleman, 2006; Lawless, 2007). Crime concerns included anti-social behaviour by young people and feeling safe in an area, issues which are closely related to satisfaction with an area in NDC areas (Duffy et al., 2008).

Table 7.1: Early Aspirations for Environmental Services

Aspirations articulated in early consultation group records in 1998/1999
Better parks
Better and cleaner open spaces
More trees
Alleygating (closing off alleys, often behind a row of houses, with gates at either end)
Litter bins/less litter
Better street lighting
Recreational spaces outdoors
Better communication between residents and services
Quicker response from services to resident complaints
Agencies to work together better

The table above summarises the improvements in environmental services residents wanted, as recorded in early programme files. Environmental issues included fly tipping; dumped rubbish on private land which caused an eyesore, often due to absent landlords; waste collection; litter; graffiti; and street sweeping.

Housing concerns were largely to do with the quality of social housing and the number of abandoned properties. Housing decline was also seen by residents and services as contributing to the area looking neglected and encouraging crime (see Appendix IV), and several residents expressed this with reference to the ‘Broken Windows Theory’ (Kelling and Wilson, 1982). Crime and environmental problems, in particular, were often seen as being related, as the Delivery Plan notes:

The work of the Task Groups and the residents survey and other consultation undertaken indicates strong demand for positive open space such as parks, play areas and kick about or other sport areas. Investment in these will deliver environmental improvements, but will also impact on crime, well being and youth disaffection.

(East Manchester NDC, 1999: 64)

We've always said, where there's grime there's crime. The cleaner the area looks the more respect it seems to get. And that's how you need to keep it.

Interview, Resident 1

As well as falling into thematic service areas, resident aspirations also fell into three types of change that residents wanted to see: investment in physical infrastructure, better relationships with public services, and better service levels. These are discussed below.

7.2.2 Capital Investment

Residents had aspirations for improved physical infrastructure in their area which required relatively large capital investment. The Housing Market Renewal programme operating in the area addressed housing development and the new Eastlands housing association took over housing improvements in the area, while other capital improvements were largely addressed by NDC rather than public services or the local authority which did not have funding for significant investment, as noted in one of the early programme Task Groups:

Without any major additional funding coming to the area e.g. via the New Deal for Communities, or Single Regeneration Budget Round 5, we would not be able to invest any more in our facilities. The investment would continue at roughly the current levels, which we are aware are not enough to maintain our stock in a satisfactory condition.

(Manchester City Council, 1998: 8)

For the local environment, residents wanted improved open spaces, improved parks, better play facilities in parks and playgrounds, and refurbished alleyways. Residents also had aspirations for community facilities such as community centres, and better housing. Funding was provided by NDC for environmental improvements (see Appendix III), for community centres, a health centre and a new high school. There was, therefore, little change in public services as a result of resident aspirations for capital investment since these changes were carried out by other agencies, and as mentioned earlier, other capital projects were 'off limits' for residents. There were indirect effects

however: NDC funded the refurbishment of parks and the play areas within them which encouraged Leisure Services, the local authority department responsible for parks, to increase input into the parks at the same time as improvements were being made. Overall, however, capital investment was not a focus for this study since other agencies were involved in this area to a much greater degree rather than mainstream public services, and the most pressing resident aspirations were for improved levels of service in any case. There are, of course, wider questions to be asked about how residents may or may not influence decisions about investment in physical infrastructure made by services and the local authority, but these were beyond the scope of this study.

7.2.3 Relationships with Services

Residents aspired to better relationships and communication with services: initial resident concerns were for basic levels of service and a relationship with services so that they could address any problems that occurred:

The starting point that we was at was about initially it was about if you, if the bin men came round and they made a complete mess once they'd emptied the bins in the streets, you know, because not all the rubbish had been tipped away properly and there was rubbish, I just want a number where I can phone to complain about that to make that better.

Interview, NDC Officer 4

Residents were dissatisfied with the response of services to complaints and lack of communication between agencies (East Manchester NDC, Undated), an important area since some local problems, such as graffiti, required the response of more than one agency (environmental patrolling staff, cleaning teams, police and youth services, in the case of graffiti). This aspiration of residents will not be discussed at length in this chapter for two reasons. Firstly, the previous chapter discussed changes in relationships with services at length, with respect to network brokers and ties. Data has been presented which demonstrates changes in the relationship between residents and public services which lead to improved communication with and responses from public services. Secondly, changing relationships with services were articulated by residents

largely as a means to an end: to improve service levels. This was their main aspiration and will be the area discussed in detail in this chapter.

7.2.4 Service Levels

Residents tended to want improved levels of service rather than any radical changes in the way that services were delivered. There were concerns amongst residents about a wide range of environmental services such as litter removal, street cleaning, improved park maintenance better grass cutting, reduced fly tipping and dumping, and less graffiti, noted in the Delivery Plan:

There are high levels of dissatisfaction with the management of the local environment – issues of litter, poor quality open space and vandalism were all repeatedly raised.

(East Manchester NDC, 1999: 41)

Poor maintenance and standard of work were also identified as issues in the area (East Manchester NDC, Undated). An Audit Commission report in 2001 found overall problems with refuse collection in Manchester, rating it one star (out of a maximum of three) (Audit Commission, 2001). Problems included taking a long time to collect missed bins, weaknesses in being responsive to residents, not having policies to ensure wheelie bins were used properly, unsafe incidents such as bins being left in the road, failing to promote the reduction in the production of waste, low recycling levels, and lack of management information (Audit Commission, 2001). This inspection stated that residents were satisfied with the service; however this was based on telephone calls to two residents/tenants associations. Of residents ringing a One Stop Shop about waste refuse with service requests, only one third were satisfied with the response.

Resident aspirations were still concerned with environmental issues later in the NDC programme. A 2004 Quality of Life Survey conducted by Manchester City Council found that litter and rubbish was thought to be the biggest environmental issue in area by 25% of residents of Bradford and Ancoats and Clayton wards, although this was lower than the Manchester average of 31%. A Best Value Resident Survey 2006 (Ipsos Mori North, 2007) found that improving the cleanliness of streets was a high priority

issue in both the Bradford and Ancoats and Clayton wards, with recycling services in Bradford also receiving a low satisfaction score.

Residents' aspirations for their local environment in 2007 were broadly similar in terms of general issues to those expressed in 1999, although expectations of standards of services may have risen so this does not necessarily indicate a lack of improvement. One of the narratives articulated by some NDC officers was that expectations had risen over time with rising standards, and is discussed in more detail later. Concerns over environmental problems tend to generally be high: for example, the 2006 Best Value Survey (Ipsos Mori North, 2007) found that 26% of complaints made to the council in Manchester were concerning environmental issues, such as litter or dumping of refuse. Observations during fieldwork in 2007 also found that concern with environmental issues was high. The table below summarises aspirations articulated by residents in public meetings during 2007:

Table 7.2: Local Issues Raised

	Frequency of issue in all meetings and street contacts observed	Frequency of issue brought up aside from dedicated crime/environment meetings
Housing	19	13
Employment	3	3
Crime and Safety	32	14
Young people (almost all about anti-social behaviour)	23	18
Environment – how services are delivered	23	14
Environment – specific local problems	39	31
Highways and parking	13	12
Health	1	1
Social/Leisure	4	4

This table summarises observation data from meetings and local environmental patrols. Twenty six meetings where service representatives attended were observed; not every

local meeting held in the area was attended for the study, although the majority of the main NDC and Ward Meetings were attended during 2007. Four environmental patrols were observed and only a small number of issues were raised by residents to staff on these occasions, but are included because they also reflect local resident concerns and provide information about service response. The middle column gives an indication of the relative frequency of issues raised: most concern were for crime, anti-social behaviour and environmental issues. This was true even when the seven meetings which were specifically crime and/or environment related were discounted, as recorded in the right-hand column.

7.2.5 Summary

Residents' primary concerns for their area were housing, crime and the local environment, the latter of which is the focus for this study. Environmental concerns were broad-ranging and residents' primary concern was for improved levels of service. Aspirations remained similar from the beginning of the NDC programme in 1999 to 2007; this was often explained as a consequence of rising expectations as a result of improvements made during the programme period rather than as evidence of a lack of improvement in services.

7.3 Processes of Change

The expansion of local governance networks due to East Manchester NDC and the corresponding network ties established enabled exchange of information and an opportunity for residents to voice aspirations for services and for services to respond. There were multiple opportunities for residents to influence public services due to the variety of engagement forums and events which NDC created, the expansion of governing into informal, peripheral spaces and the improved quality of relationships. This section discusses processes of change that occurred in East Manchester NDC, in both formal and informal, peripheral governance spaces. First, however, issues to do with collecting data on processes of change are noted.

7.3.1 Collecting Data on Change

Analysis was carried out on governing processes during 2007 by recording resident aspirations and the response of services, and outcomes where possible, and also by recording resident aspirations in 1999 and examining outcomes that had occurred by 2007 using a theory based approach to describe processes of participation and influence. Collecting data on change processes was very challenging because of multiplicity of processes. Even using an ethnographic method, it was not possible to collect data on every instance of a resident voicing an aspiration or the response because they took place outside of formal meetings often, through direct phone calls for instance. Additionally, processes were not always linear or direct and could be repetitive: residents would raise the same aspiration or complaint several times in different ways, at different meetings for example. In some cases an issue would be raised several times in different meetings over a period of time while the service was trying to resolve it. This type of data was also often not recorded, particularly with detail about follow up action, or where it was it was incomplete. Additionally, NDC officers had not made or retained some records from early consultation events for example, and therefore the processes over the lifetime of the programme were difficult to record.

Even where more formal mechanisms were in place for recording pathways, they did not record every aspiration or response from services. For example, data was collected from some environmental service employees which summarised each job they had, what their response was and when it was completed; this did not tally particularly well with data collected from meetings observed where these staff were present and were receiving service requests. Environmental problems, such as a fly tipping incident, identified in meetings did not always appear in their own work summaries and vice versa. However, their work records did tend to address the same types of issues that residents complained about. Outcomes were rarely recorded in the minutes of formal meetings, although some issues would be ongoing if they were not resolved: for example concerns over CCTV cameras in the area appeared in several meeting minutes and were eventually resolved when a representative from the city control centre came to a meeting to respond to concerns. Local authority performance and survey data was problematic in terms of measuring change over time because performance regimes and the type of data collected often changed.

Furthermore, many issues were ongoing and less about specific incidents or issues than broader problems with services. There were various issues of this type such as improving the recycling services, getting lighting for one park, repairing storm damage at a park when many other parks had suffered similar damage, monitoring what the CCTV service was doing, the problem of illegal off-road bikes which tended to recur every summer, car parking at one site, the opening of a new health centre which was severely delayed. These issues were raised several times in different meetings and tended to take longer to resolve because they sometimes required agencies to work together or needed to go through a process. For example, derelict sites causing litter or vandalism problems would be subject to legal enforcement orders if communication with landowners was unsuccessful, and then these would be followed up over several months. Graffiti in a particular park could be a persistent problem that needed continual action, and a resident might ask about what was being done; services would respond that were already aware of the problem, had cleared some of it and would be in the process of trying to trace the perpetrators. Police investigations would take time, usually several months. A health centre opening delay was caused by a legal dispute which took time to resolve and was not under the control of NDC or any of the health representatives present at local meetings. For these long term issues it could be difficult to identify when an issue had been resolved, and in some cases they had begun before the fieldwork period and had not been resolved by the end. Services could also give a response sometimes which was not quite what a resident wanted but in some way met their aspirations.

Processes of resident aspirations being voiced and services responding, therefore, were not always clear in terms of the beginning or end of the process, or whether they were 'successful' or not, or in terms of comprehensively recording their detail. However, it was possible to identify some processes of change, if not all, and themes did emerge about how some changes occurred. These are described below, in terms of change occurring through formal governance meetings and through informal, peripheral governance spaces.

7.3.2 Routes of Change in Services

This section describes how changes in services occurred through formal meetings, through brokers, and through the forming of strong ties.

7.3.2.1 *Change Through Formal Meetings*

During observations of meetings in 2007, the responses of services were recorded, in order to explore initial reactions of public service representatives to resident aspirations that had been voiced.

Table 7.3: Frequency of Responses to Resident Concerns

Service Response	Frequency	Policy/Service Area
No comment made	6	Usually crime/policing issues. Non-response possibly due to residents sometimes making a pointed remark rather than asking a direct question
Denial that problem exists	3	Two of the comments were concerned with warden patrols and information about them provided to residents
Will not or cannot change service	14	Policing issues and services for problem/ anti-social youth
Residents need to contribute to solving problem	17	Services largely required provision of information by residents on crime, antisocial behaviour or environmental issues e.g. exact location of problem
Will look into it	45	Housing, environment and highways most represented for this response. Services could not respond immediately because need to see/verify the problem, get an exact location etc.
Already doing something	41	Were already addressing, monitoring, collecting information or investigating problem. This type of response was fairly evenly spread across different services.
Invite other service to address issue	7	Relevant service (often housing) not at meeting and issue needed to be referred to them.
Will change service	20	Mostly environmental issues got this response, whether about service delivery such as providing more information, or dealing with something like a fly-tipping incident

The table above summarises the responses of public agency representatives to the resident concerns raised in meetings and on patrols. It shows the general frequency of

various types of responses made to residents. Again, as not every meeting was attended during the 2007 fieldwork year it is not intended as a complete record of every resident-service interaction but to give a general idea of what types of responses were made to residents. The table indicates a contrast between policing, crime and anti-social behaviour services, where residents were more likely to not get a response in a meeting or be told a service could not be changed, and environmental services which were more likely to respond by changing something. This is in part because some environmental issues were relatively simple to address, such as cutting back hedging, whereas crime and anti-social or youth issues tended to be more complex, long term and more difficult to resolve. Services were often already aware of or addressing a local problem which was taking a certain amount of time to resolve, leading to repeated residents comments or complaints sometimes. This table also shows the importance of information to services in addressing local resident concerns, since the most common response was that the service would collect more information about a problem. Services often wanted residents to provide them with more information as well and would sometimes already be in the process of collecting information when a resident raised the concern. The following were very typical exchanges between a residents and public service representatives:

Fieldnotes, Local Meeting April 2007

Concerns were raised by residents about overgrown shrubs along the path adjacent to the canal. [Name of employee who patrols area] is aware of the problem and will liaise with [parks employee] to have these cut back.

Fieldnotes, Local Meeting August 2007

Resident: A resident has said that there are a lot of sharps (drug needles), around sixty, in the A6 (local police) area.

Police officer: We need more information. Is it in a particular address/location?

Resident: I will try to get more information from the person.

Accountability was also enhanced through the NDC network through local meetings. If residents were dissatisfied with a service, local service representatives would be invited (or summoned) to a local meeting to address the issue. Being accountable in the context of a local meeting, with other services and regeneration officers being present created additional pressure as public services were sensitive about their public image and local

reputation. These types of contact were less based on personal relationships and would be used where previous efforts had failed; despite the improved contact and relationships between public services and residents in the area therefore, there remained a role for more formal governance structures. Minute-taking was also important for some issues where services could not respond immediately; this mechanism would ensure that the issue would be publicly revisited later on and further action could be taken if necessary:

I think they respond better because it's on the minutes, isn't it? So if you go to the next, if it doesn't happen it's on the next minutes, you can pick it up on matters arising, and you can keep at it, can't you, until the person will get it done.

Interview, Resident 7

At meetings is a good place anyway to get their attention because they've got to be alert to what you're asking them because it's being minuted. They have to answer your questions and give you a timeline basically and say well we'll get back to you.

Interview, Resident 5

Meetings were aspects of network governing where interchanges took place through weak ties between actors in the network, since these were formal environments where interactions were relatively impersonal. Minuting ensured responses from services. The following two sections discuss more personal aspects of ties which contributed to changes in services.

7.3.2.2 Change Through Brokers

As the previous chapter notes, brokers were critical in linking services with residents and assisting with participation and governing processes. They opened communication channels which had an effect of increasing awareness of community aspirations to services. In the case of NDC officers their roles also included mediating conflict and advocating for residents. NDC officers were particularly important because they had brokering functions which promoted the voice of residents:

Interviewer: How much influence do you think residents have on services, how much influence have you had?

Respondent: When I can get them to the table, I can meet them table, over a table, but, but if we didn't have NDC as a go-between I don't know what kind of influence we would have.

Interviewer: So why is NDC important?

Respondent: Because they're open to it. They've got the residents a voice.

Interview, Resident 3

NDC officers were present in local authority ward meetings as well as their own forums, so their role as a broker between residents and services was fairly comprehensive as these were the main meetings where residents and services would meet regularly. Brokering involved several types of intervention, including: diffusing arguments, asking services to answer a resident's question properly, inviting service representatives to attend meetings, following up an issue themselves by contacting services directly following a meeting, or providing additional information to people. NDC officers were also called upon by residents to address instances where changes were being made to services without residents being consulted, leading to residents raising queries. For example, questions were raised about housing development issues because they did not always feel they were being consulted by HMR, or about local CCTV where changes were being made by the local authority without consulting residents. Brokering was applied to different services across the board although more often for highways, and once for health, because those services tended not to attend meetings.

Within services, a direct and known contact between residents and public service employees improved the response of services in terms of change:

We used them a few times [mention two environmental service employee names]. They'd be here straight away. I only had to phone up and they were here the same day.

Interview, Resident 9

I've got three quite, well four [resident groups],,, three that are very strong that I work with in [local area]. But the thing with them is they usually come to me with jobs that they know I can do and sort out for them. Or at least get a job put on and chase it up. And due to that, cos they know that I'll do something when they ask me to, I think we've just built up a trust between us really.

Interview, Public Service Employee 6

Furthermore, brokers with whom residents had a more personal relationship with were perceived as being crucial for how responsive a service was:

Libraries, if you're offering a library service, if you've got a good library manager that wants to develop services within that library, that wants to make it feel welcoming, that wants to put on like a nature table for the young people, that kind of thing. So you'll have libraries within this area that can offer better facilities because of the people that are within them, because they've had the benefit of working within the Public Agencies Forum that knows the ethos of the area, that kind of thing. So that will be delivered. But operational services, that's more of a central services isn't it? And although libraries is a central service, but you've got these independent teams that are working out there. But others that do, you know, "Oh no, we've got this service, and some of it is contracted out maybe" and it's managed slightly differently. But relationships have changed because of individuals within communities that have gotten to know individuals who are service providers and they don't just see that person now as a man from the council. They him as [name] or [name] or whoever, who they can talk to.

Interview, NDC Officer 4

So they [ground level public service employees] will know the right people. So it's having, ports of contact's important obviously. But there's that breakaway as well, "Well I can't help you with that because I don't know what to do but I do know someone who can"..., it's like a friendship thing, it's networking. Cos you're going "Right, this woman, she does, she's head of such and such a thing, so if I give you her number you try her, but if you don't have no luck ring me back". Then you ring them and you go "[NDC Officer] gave me your number, I was looking for a grant for books for the school" and "Oh right, yeah. We've stopped doing that but there is this other...." So it's that sort of jotting down, making sure you get all the right

people. Everybody then is helpful. It's not a matter of passing you to a different department to shut you up, it's that networking thing you know.

Interview, Resident 5

Most actors had very few links to strategic decision making structures in the local authority area and resident participation outcomes were limited to the very local level. This was of little concern to residents since their interest tended to be limited to their own very local areas: having contact with a patrolling environmental worker was useful for solving a litter or vandalism problem on a resident's street but not for having an input into how the local authority's environmental budget was allocated, but very few residents had an interest in wider strategic issues in any case:

7.3.2.3 Change Through Strong Ties

The description of network brokers above includes references to the personal nature of the relationships, or strong ties, that brokers had with residents and other agencies. Having a more personalised relationship was important to responsiveness in some cases:

I think you get more, a personal touch and a personal response with them. And you say "Hello this is, hi this is [name], on a such and such a thing". Then they'll know you and you'll know them and it's easier to get, if something happened in the street or rubbish has not been moved, or bins are left, we get onto [public service employee]. We know him, we know he's a good fella. And you've probably met [public service employee]. And you see him in the streets so he's not just an officer who gets muck cleared away for you and the bins emptied. He's sort of a personal friend. So you can talk to him. And you'll know then that things get done.

Interview, Resident 7

"Can you get this rubbish removed?"

"Well yeah, we'll make a phone call, see what we can do". And then you know, probably the next morning it had been removed, so yeah, you know, people were, were asking us a lot because we were there, we were approachable, we were at the meeting or we were out on the street and they'd seen us. Or

"While you were there I forgot to mention, someone pinched my bin the other day, can you do anything about it?"

"Right, I'll make one phone call, stand there while you're there, right what's your postcode sir?" Give em the postcode, tell them your address, blah blah.

"Right, they've said you'll have a new bin Monday morning at 8 o'clock."

Interview, Public Service Employee 1

The quality of the relationship was important above and beyond merely having contacts in place, since contact alone was not always a reliable way to achieve a response:

The contact side of it I think is there. You get in touch with them, it's 50-50, do they achieve it? [draws in breath].

Interview, Resident 6

As noted in the previous chapter, changing personal aspects, or strong ties, were based on face to face contact and increased understanding, as these built strong ties. Initial conflict reduced but residents retained their assertiveness in communicating with services. Trust was also sometimes an important element in the relationship for responsiveness as it increased the likelihood of a response from services:

If they don't meet you and see you and know you and trust you then they're not going to do anything; you're not going to do a great deal.

Interview, Public Service Manager 3

As well as meetings being useful for residents in terms of influencing services, relationships with brokers and the development of more personal, trusting relationships was between residents and service employees were a factor in processes of resident influence which increased the chances of resident aspirations resulting in outcomes in services.

7.3.2.4 *Personal Accountability*

Closer, more personal and face-to-face ties created some form of accountability for residents, as they created a space within governing processes where services would have to at least be confronted by residents' views:

I don't think there's anything better than personal knowledge of that person. It's not a case then you can hold that person to ransom or to task, but at least you've got that personalised issue with that person. That "[name], I've got a problem!" "We'll do our best to sort it out".

Interview, Resident 6

In particular, having more direct and face-to-face contact made it quite difficult for services to avoid residents and were therefore under more pressure to respond:

Interviewer: Is there a particular preference that people seem to have for how they communicate with you?

Respondent: Probably yeah, in person. Just coming in.

Interviewer: That's what they prefer?

Respondent: Well, they feel that that way they've got your attention and if they keep coming you can't escape or avoid them behind the phone or email. People do that. But "Yeah, we'll get back to you" and then obviously for lots of us we've got quite a wide remit so you get involved with something else and you might not get round to it. And then they'll come back and you're walking; you say "well, yeah". It refreshes you to get back.

Interview, Public Service Employee 4

The face to face, when it's face to face that's the, you know, the biggest thing isn't it, when you can't kind of hide away from somebody.

Interview, NDC Officer 2

Most residents preferred to have local, known staff in their area rather than central, anonymous telephone numbers for reporting issues, because they felt they received a more satisfactory response in terms of their problem being dealt with. Active residents had telephone numbers of public service employees and would phone them directly.

These arrangements promoted more personal forms of accountability where individuals would have to answer directly for the local service rather than accountability existing at the organisational level:

You say "Hello this is, hi this is [name], on a such and such a thing". They they'll know you and you'll know them and it's easier to get, if something happened in the street or rubbish has not been moved, or bins are left, we get onto [environmental service employee]

Interview, Resident 7

It's impossible, it's not impossible but it's very difficult, if somebody you've been working with who you've met a few times phones you up and says, talks to you about a project, you can't ignore them can you?

Interview, Public Service Manager 3

7.3.3 Preferred and Reserve Routes of Change

Residents used various routes to influence services, and these differed by individual, for example some would use councillors occasionally if other routes had failed, while others thought they were ineffective. Some were happy to use central telephone numbers while most preferred a direct contact number with an individual, or face to face contact on the street. However, there was a general order of preferences.

7.3.3.1 Resident Preferences

Residents interviewed tended to feel that the relationships they had been able to build with local public agencies have been a significant route for them to influence services, at least at the informal, very local level. However, where this failed, the more formal environments of local meetings (the reserve route) were necessary where service representatives could be addressed directly in a public arena. Brokers, particularly NDC officers, were also necessary, as were councillors. Councillors were most directly linked to strategic decision making and were seen to have an obligation to local communities because of their role in local democratic structures, and so could be useful from this perspective:

Respondent: Whereas residents feel, I'm not saying they feel they can't do that but they feel they get more done by "oh I'll go and tell the councillors", you know, like big, important, you know what I mean.

Interviewer: But they, so they'll try the service first

Respondent: They'll try the service first

Interviewer: And then the councillors?

Respondent: Yeah, and then, but I always say to them "Look if you get no joy, just phone your councillors". And things do get moving then.

Interview, Public Service Employee 2

Residents had mixed views about how helpful councillors were however:

Fieldnotes, NDC Meeting March 2007

An NDC officer talks about producing a list of useful telephone numbers, for crime, housing and so on. One resident says (sarcastically) "Don't put the local councillors' numbers on it".

Overall, residents had a variety of potential pathways to exploit and used them strategically:

People know where to go if there's a problem. And if they can't get it sorted they'll probably come in here, and this is more of a last resort. "I'm off into the ward meeting because I'm trying to get these issues dealt with and nobody's listening to me".

Interview, NDC Officer 2

They might come to me. They might use the local ward councillor if they thought that that might be beneficial. They might write directly to [NDC Officer]. They might make a complaint to the paper. Or if it was a big issue go maybe to Channel M or something like that. They might bring issues up at the forum or use platforms where they can raise issues. So I would say yeah. And they're aware of strategies and methods to use. And some might adopt a completely different approach. It might be about like "Hiya, how are you doing, not seen you for ages, do you know

you might be able to help me out with this because I've got a right problem with such and such" So yeah they know how to get things done.

Interview, NDC Officer 4

The following interviewee emphasised the significance of having a broker and good relationships with a service who would listen to residents, but also the necessity of meetings if things went wrong:

Respondent: Now if you've got somebody that is going to listen and take information on board, as an individual, then they're going to transfer the information. But that person might come along and be of the attitude that he's not going to take on anything that the residents say. That ambivalence sometimes happens, sometimes not. More often than not, the guys that come along are really really good. And they'll have a laugh and a joke and they'll chat afterwards if they're not anxious to get away quick. Not everybody, but now and again you'll get an individual that will come along, that didn't want to come along in the first place, to represent whoever they're from, so you're already up against that barrier to start with.

Interviewer: And what happens, are you less likely to get a result from someone like that?

Respondent: Not necessarily because we're taking minutes of the meetings all the time, and then when those meetings are recounted at the following residents' forum, someone that has brought up something that might have said it's going to be resolved, can highlight that issue again and then [NDC Officer] can take it on further.

Interview, Resident 8

The use of network ties should therefore be seen in a wider context of options for residents. Residents tended to prefer dealing with service problems in the following hierarchy, in order of decreasing preference:

1. Services perform their tasks up to an acceptable standard without residents having to become involved, such as streets being swept thoroughly
2. Residents contact a public service representative directly, either face-to-face or via a personal telephone number, to raise a concern or alert the representative to a

problem such as fly tipping. Face-to-face contact was sometimes seen as more effective as some service employees might ignore phone calls, especially if the person was not known.

3. Residents contact a public service through a central telephone number such as 'Environment on Call' to alert the service to a problem
4. Residents attend a local meeting to raise the problem, preferably with the service also present to answer questions, often after other attempts to resolve the problem with services have failed
5. Residents contact a 'broker' such as an NDC officer to deal with the problem directly with services, often after raising the issue in a local meeting has failed to resolve the problem
6. Residents contact a councillor and/or the local press about the problem

Although in environmental services network ties worked well, residents felt that pressure needed to be kept on environmental services to keep levels of service up to the standard they wanted; this was the first preference for most residents, not for participation but for adequate service delivery. Failing this, residents had a preference for simple, direct methods that were the least time-consuming, but would need a reserve route sometimes. All of these routes apart from the councillor/press option can be seen as using network routes (including the use of brokers), as they all involved making contacts with individuals in formal or informal spaces.

Network ties could be useful, in the context of other strategies, for residents to exert influence:

Some will use local members, politicians. Some will use the press. Some will use the fact that they are well known and gobby, some will use power in terms of the numbers, in terms of large numbers will descend on meetings to get what they want. Some can be very coercive in terms of using the fact that they are well known and well liked with officers in terms of to get their point of view across.

Interview, NDC Officer 1

However, the options for communications that residents had depended partly on whether they knew people in public services or not. Network ties of the kind where a more personal relationship had formed were not universal but limited to active residents:

Interviewer: Would you go to a meeting and speak to someone face to face or would you ring them up?

Respondent: Well, both. If I knew that, if it was, you know, probably now I'd go and speak to them face to face. If I was newer, I was going to the meeting, I'd go to the meeting and tell them.

Interview, Resident 7

7.3.3.2 Public Service Perspectives

From the point of view of services, resident engagement was generally welcomed as it provided local intelligence for agencies, although residents were sometimes conscious of being seen as 'moaning' or 'nagging' and services did not always value resident contact if they thought their concerns were not legitimate. Services were positive about the benefits of joint working, including working with residents, as they tended to think it made their job easier overall, despite some extra costs:

Things like the engagement with the [local resident groups] has gone well, if on days you've thought "oh my God no, they're not on the phone for me again are they?!" [laughs]. But that's part of the job isn't it? If people have got problems there's, it might not be a problem to you but it might be a very real problem to them, try and deal with it. And I think in the main that's, that's worked well.

Interview, Public Service Employee 5

I think in general we talk to them [residents] a lot more now. We have more linkages. And we attend a lot more forums and meetings.... That's a good in, because the friends groups, the residents groups, community groups, are nearly always represented on them meetings, so those issues can be raised quite quickly. It's, there's more of an understanding over the last ten years from officers, from general workers in our department that, like all councils, they are much more accountable nowadays. So ten years ago you would get the odd phone call off a local resident. Now you get millions of them... There's much more dialogue. It creates its own problems in that expectations are raised... and we have the issues

that we always have like the finite budgets to deal with it, so you do sometimes get that sort of conflict. But in general I think it works very well really.

Interview, Public Service Manager 3

The provision of local information and an indication of resident satisfaction were particularly useful for services, and resident participation provided them with local knowledge quickly even if, as noted earlier, there was some ambivalence about the value of the information:

Interviewer: How useful is, or firstly do residents provide you with information that's useful to your job?

Respondent: Yeah

Interviewer: And how, how important is it compared to other sort of information that you have?

Respondent: It's extremely important. It's extremely important because without the residents to be honest with you we, there's no point any of us being here because we're, we're doing this for the residents. And without their input then, you know, so small as it may be, it may only be you know one phone call and we go out and check it out and, and we get that problem resolved that's one resident or, maybe only one resident's reported that incident but there's twenty residents that aren't happy about that thing. So, it's taken that one resident to phone is, is made life happier for twenty people. So it's extremely important that they phone us. Or contact us in, in any way they can, to resolve that so...

Interview, Public Service Employee 1

NDC are quite good at getting people to come in. And sometimes people come in and the information transfer is really really good. And they gain something from it as much as the residents, because the residents can input things, and say "Oh well that's a good idea I'll put that down and I'll see what we can do".

Interview, Resident 8

The broad changes in emphasis on participation and 'customer feedback' in public services also had a role as services were under more pressure to maintain a good relationship with residents and service users:

We rely on resident feedback because we need to know, we need to justify ourselves that we're doing a good job

Interview, Public Service Manager 7

Both groups were positive about network ties and their use, with a different emphasis based on their different roles in the network. Exchanges between residents and services could also demonstrate conflict at times, necessitating the role of NDC as a broker, and some NDC officers and residents thought that services also avoided conflict at times by avoiding attendance at meetings. Conflict was largely reported and observed in meetings rather than in informal governance spaces, indicating perhaps that the more personal, face-to-face contacts involved different sorts of network ties.

7.3.4 Changes in Feelings of Influence

The previous section described various processes of change in the NDC network and routes of influence. This section explores whether active residents and the general population of residents in East Manchester felt they had influenced public services and decision making in the local area.

7.3.4.1 Active Residents and Feelings of Influence

Feelings about influence among active residents were multi-faceted depending on the various experiences residents had had within and between services, and over time. There were positive perceptions about some services and negative feelings about others; housing redevelopment in the area was particularly controversial for some interviewees and affected overall perceptions of the regeneration process and their involvement in it.

Resident feelings of influence could be affected by the multiplicity of experiences they had with public agencies, especially when agencies worked together and it could be difficult to distinguish roles clearly. While NDC was an overall positive experience for residents, their overall feelings about influence were affected by negative encounters with other services or agencies:

I think that there's been certain things that have happened in the way that, not necessarily New Deal, but in the way that some organisations have delivered a service where then residents have felt excluded from the process, and thought "Oh you're never really going to change anything, are you?". And that'll be because of experiences that they've had with things.

Interview, NDC Officer 4

Satisfaction with influence would vary across service, and housing issues may have become more pertinent later on in the programme as more and more residents would have been affected by redevelopment. Residents' feelings of satisfaction with services were about communication as well as actual dealing with a problem, even if a service did not respond with changes in the way they wanted, as mentioned earlier residents were sometimes frustrated with the lack of information provided by services and this led to distrust:

And just having that, not even instant even if ops [Operational Services] said to be "It's going to be four weeks before we get that lamp fixed on your street" that's fine cos then I can say to residents "It will be four weeks". And they'll go "Right well she's given us a time, she said". They might have a moan and say "Why does it have to take four weeks?" But at least they've got a time limit and a definite. So it's that call and response, the fact that when we call, that job gets done and so it puts, that is a really really important thing.

Interview, Resident 5

Interviewer: When you're in meetings, and there is knowledge, when you're telling people from public services about what's going on, do you think they value the residents knowledge as much as their own? Do you feel equal in that respect?

Respondent: It's never going to be equal but it depends what point is being put across. If it's of benefit to the people that have come to the meeting, they'll take that on board. If they feel it's going to be a hindrance to their operation then perhaps not. But it's a hard one really. Some residents, again, if they've had a transport issue with their transport provider they might be asking six, seven, eight, nine questions. And then you get somebody else answer no. And then that'll be the end of it. But at least that person has been at that meeting, seen the person face to

face, air grievances from their association and then would hope to see some resolve in it. So it's an awkward one to answer really.

Interview, Resident 8

Active resident satisfaction levels with services were complex, therefore, and depended on attitudes of services and communication skills as well as actual service outcomes.

7.3.4.2 Overall Perceptions of Influence in the Area

The opportunity to participate and influence through networks was only taken up by a small proportion of local residents. While active residents felt they had influenced some services, there was little evidence that there was a change in the wider population in terms of how much people felt they could influence local decision making.

There were small changes in the percentage of residents who felt they could influence decisions in their local area, which increased slightly between 2002 to 2006, from 20% to 25%, according to Mori survey data but decreased from 32% to 29% between 2002 and 2005 according to the local Kwest Survey, which was commissioned by NDC. Mori data showed a national average of 26% in 2004 and an average of 25% in NDC areas nationally, which had increased slightly from 23% in 2002. Mori data showed that East Manchester was broadly similar to the national NDC average therefore.

In the 2006 Best Value Survey (Ipsos Mori North, 2007), Bradford Ward did better in terms of being satisfied with opportunities for participating in decision making compared to the Manchester average (41% compared to 30%). Similarly, 45% of Bradford residents felt they could influence decisions compared to 39% across Manchester overall. By 2007 however, only 41 % of NDC residents said they were very or fairly well informed about how to get involved in decision making (Ipsos Mori North, 2007), an issue active residents and NDC officers periodically expressed frustration with because of extensive efforts to publicise NDC and its events.

Survey data on satisfaction levels, however, are a problematic measure of influence on services for several reasons. Firstly, it is a subjective measure and it is not clear how well related feelings of influence and actual influence are. For instance, some

respondents may feel they could influence services without actually having ever tried. Secondly, turnover of residents will have affected these figures: East Manchester had displacement and turnover because of housing development and also experienced normal churn and immigration into the area. During the programme period the population fell and then rose again, the percentage of social housing fell and the ethnic profile changed slightly due to a larger immigrant population arriving from Eastern Europe. Thirdly, survey questions were unspecific: there were various ways in which residents could influence local decisions, not just through NDC and local forums, but the various routes were not specified in questions.

An analysis of national NDC data (which has a much larger dataset and therefore more reliable findings) has not been able to find a relationship between feelings of influencing local decisions and greater satisfaction with an area or services, or other community-based indicators, either by comparing different NDC areas across time or with each other (see Duffy et al., 2008). This means that survey data did not find any significant relationship between feelings of influence and improved satisfaction with an area or feelings of community or trust, or between involvement in NDC and feelings of influence. Lastly, the confidence interval for the larger, Mori, survey was 3.5%, meaning a difference of at least 7% difference between figures either over time or between areas was necessary to attribute change reliably (Mori, 2004), and most changes observed for participation had smaller differences in the East Manchester data set.

In any case, NDC was a programme with limited funds and scope in the context of broader local authority and public service operations, and would be expected to have a relatively small impact on this measure. Given the Mori and Kwest survey results, it is possible that NDC in East Manchester had a small impact on feelings of influence particularly in the early stages of the programme when forums were set up and community consultation events were held, and this has levelled off or possibly decreased slightly once the initial intense stage of activity levelled off or declined. It is also possible that greater involvement or awareness over time might have given rise to higher expectations which could not be met. The more consistent survey results were for Bradford ward scoring higher on levels of feelings of influence compared to the Manchester average, probably reflecting the activity of NDC in the area.

7.3.5 Summary

Documenting complex pathways of change were challenging, both during the 2007 period and for the 1999-2007 period. However, interview and observation data showed that meetings, brokers and more personal relationships facilitated improved service responsiveness to residents. Because of the wide ranging scope of governance networks in the area, residents had a choice of various pathways of change they could pursue and would use different routes, with a general preference for more direct contacts with known public service employees. They would also rely on NDC as a broker, especially if other routes failed. Services also valued increased network contacts, even if they brought conflict at times, largely because of the increased information about the area they received which they used in delivering services.

Although active residents generally felt positively about change that occurred in services through meetings, personal contacts, and through NDC officers acting on their behalf, feelings were mixed about their overall influence in the area. This was partly due to large scale change taking place in the area, particularly housing development which they often felt they had little control over, and since agencies worked together closely feelings towards them were sometimes conflated. Overall perceptions of influence amongst the broader population of residents in the NDC area were unclear as far as change over time was concerned; at best there was a small improvement in perceptions of influence, though the number of residents actively involved in decision making remained small. The NDC area did perform better than the Manchester average in this respect however.

7.4 Impact on Services

So far this chapter has described resident aspirations for the area and processes of and perceptions of change. This section examines evidence on whether environmental services changed in the area, from different perspectives.

7.4.1 Stories of Success

Public sector agencies had a tendency to report success in their own programmes and services and to talk about future improvements rather than reflect on past failures:

We have Manchester's good things, and it has 'challenges'. Not good things and bad things.

Interview, Council/Government Officer 1

For example, a strategic review of NEM in 2007 (which included a review of NDC) recognised that there was 'still much to do in the area'. The lack of a more objective perspective made assessing service improvement more difficult. Related to this was the decreased resident attendance at forums, which had been attributed by NDC officers to increased satisfaction with services, in other words that residents attended fewer meetings later on because they were satisfied with the area and with services and no longer felt a need to engage to the same extent:

I think if people were unhappy people would be knocking on the door here and demanding here. There would be more people wanting to be on the board because they're unhappy about what had happened. They'd be questioning whether we'd actually got our, got things right ... I think from a New Deal for Communities point of view is that the lack of engagement is not down to the fact that we don't try to engage people is that people are no longer interested in coming to meetings which I think that's a degree of normality. At the beginning is that huge numbers of people wanted to come to meetings to demand for things to be done, had never been involved or engaged before. Didn't trust what was going on to an extent.

Interview, NDC Officer 1

There were meetings every night for various forums, and they were, they were very heavily attended. And people were, were angry and banging on the door and, you know, wanted a lot of answers. And I think to some extent that has, it's gone away and I think that's a good thing because I think people are a little bit more satisfied with what they're getting from it.

Interview, NDC Officer 3

However, residents interviewed had a variety of reasons for deciding whether to attend forums or not, including personal circumstances, so it is likely there were a variety of reasons for stagnating or declining engagement, including the personal circumstances of residents such as burn out from intensive engagement, the birth of grandchildren or ageing (most of the active residents were over 55). Disillusionment was also a factor in some cases; in others there was a feeling that they had achieved what they wanted to for their own local area, or had other more local routes to address services rather than through NDC meetings such as direct contacts with service staff. The 'story' told about residents being satisfied with services and as a result participating less is therefore not necessarily a broad indicator of improved services, though this was the case for some residents.

A second 'story of success' was the explanation of the persistence of resident aspirations for environmental standards to improve if one compared aspirations between 1999 and 2007. This was explained not in terms of failures of services to improve adequately but in terms of the rising aspirations of residents. This view was articulated by NDC officers and public service employees more frequently than residents:

There's an irony, a very poor space would not get many complaints. People would be, it's like a run down estate. People get used to a run down estate, they get used to a run down green space. If you can then show them across the road what a really good green space looks like, then people will say "Why is mine not like that?". It creates a groundswell for people to take it more seriously and influence politicians etc. The same as if you've got a bad green space and you don't, well you just don't get a complaint. If you've got a good green space you will get a complaint. People will say "That bin is now full and it's been full all day and nobody's cleared it". The space across the road without a bin with rubbish on the floor, nobody will phone you up and say that's a problem. It's setting a standard. And the standard has gone up year on year on year.

Interview, Public Service Manager 3

Comments that have been made about parks and facilities in the area, we wouldn't have had those comments at the beginning because people didn't have those kind of aspirations. Whereas now they're actually complaining about the facilities that

have gone in and things “it's not good enough, it's slipping, that, we don't want it here” and I think that's a good thing.

Interview, NDC Officer 3

This is not to say that environmental services and standards did not improve over time, but that a positive aspect was focused on to a greater degree sometimes than the continuing problems in the area, particularly with maintenance of the environment.

7.4.2 Changes in Environmental Services

7.4.2.1 Overall Change

Data on the overall outcomes for environmental services in the NDC area were positive although mixed. Table 7.4 below presents a summary of resident aspirations for environmental issues and the outcomes achieved by 2007. It highlights that where improvements did appear to have been made they tended to fluctuate across time. This was partly due to ongoing or more strategic issues that were not always resolved; some issues were dealt with but recurred, and some were part of larger ongoing issues, such as problem tenants and landlord licensing which had an impact on rubbish dumping and dereliction on some sites.

The table above also shows the significant role of the NDC programme in improving the local environment. This occurred through direct funding, but also through the piloting of projects and subsequent transfer of maintenance to public sector agencies, such as the Alleygating Scheme (see Appendix III). NDC's involvement sometimes also attracted additional efforts in the local area from services. Additionally, NDC mapped the local area to identify ownership of various spaces, which had not been done before and was one of the reasons maintenance of some areas was not kept up. Identifying ownership meant services and private owners could be held responsible for improving the environmental quality of some sites.

Table 7.4: Summary of Environmental Outcomes

Aspirations articulated in early consultation group records in 1998/1999	Outcome
Better parks	Refurbishment of parks carried out by NDC, maintenance improved at times but was variable
Better open spaces, cleaner	NDC funded physical improvements. Made small improvements in service levels but fluctuated
More trees	Strategy to plant more introduced in 2007, but in response to external consultants' report
Alleygating	Installation of alley gates in a rolling programme, funded by NDC
Litter bins/less litter	Service level improved but fluctuated
Better street lighting	Largely addressed, part of housing redevelopment programme often
Recreational spaces outdoors	Better play areas and areas for teenagers, funded by NDC
Better communication between residents and services	Improved, through intervention of NDC. Uneven across services
Quicker response from services to resident complaints	Improved for environmental services, through intervention of NDC and through local authority SEM programme and the Wardens
Agencies to work together better	Improved, due to NDC and to general public sector trends in this area

Improvements in the environment reflect a broader trend in NDC areas nationally: greater change occurred for place rather than people-based indicators (Lawless, 2007), partly based people-based outcomes in the areas of health and education take many years to show effect. This could also be due to fact that regeneration programmes are spatially-oriented programmes (Coaffee and Deas, 2008) or that residents interests are stronger in this area. The programme had not made any significant impact on the levels of deprivation overall however: in 2006 the deprivation levels in the area remained high (Audit Commission, 2006), although NDC despite being a large programme remained relatively small compared to overall service provision and funding in the area.

7.4.2.2 Resident Perceptions of Overall Change

Environmental service levels improved over time according to most interviewees:

We just wanted the service to BE delivered. It just wasn't being delivered. Now it's running how it should actually run. Ideally now this is how it should run. I don't think you'll improve on the fact that, if you're looking at the streets and the cleanliness and the general disruption that you might get, whether it be street lights going out, whether it be a car that's been blown up on a corner. The cars are still getting blown up on corners and being stolen, but now they're not there for four weeks and more damage coming because kids are coming and gathering round them.

Interview, Resident 5

I would say that the people in, in the area... are getting happier, are a lot more happier than six years ago with regard to the environmental side of things. It's, it's cleaner, it's tidier, the bin men are better.

Interview, Public Service Employee 1

Policing was another service area which was a high priority for residents and where some did not feel able to influence, possibly because it is a highly centralised service in some respects:

Respondent: I think there's some residents that feel that they will never influence the way that certain services are delivered.

Interviewer: What, no matter what's done?

Respondent: Exactly yeah, yeah. And I think one of the best examples of that is the service that's come in for the most criticism throughout the process which has been the police.

Interview, NDC Officer 4

Resident opinions about environmental improvements tended to vary across time but also according to different local areas. Variation by area was significant because many residents mainly had concerns about their own very local area, some of which had had local projects implemented while others had not:

I think the residents who actually got things like the small community gardens and their alleygating, on that level, are very happy with it... But I think on some levels one or two of them have said "It's not improved so it's had an impact on me, but what it's done is improved things like the access to the stadium and access to the sports city but it's not actually improved things for us".

Interview, Voluntary Sector Representative 4

7.4.2.3 Area Satisfaction Data

Satisfaction data from Mori surveys of the NDC area generally indicated small perceived improvements among the East Manchester population over the programme period, described in detail below. While satisfaction rates are not particularly reliable indicators of change, as expectations tended not to be stable over time, they broadly reflect other data collected about strengths and weaknesses in environmental service provision. By 2007, Bradford Ward (the major part of the NDC area) had similar satisfaction rates to Manchester averages for environmental issues: almost same for household waste collection (85% compared to 86%) and were slightly below for street cleanliness following bin collection (72% compared to 76%) (Ipsos Mori North, 2007). Recycling provision fared the worst: it had a satisfaction rate of 46% compared to the city average of 62%. Recycling was an issue residents raised several times in meetings during 2007 and service representatives were beginning to become more involved and offer more services. An Audit Commission inspection found that by 2005 improvements had been made in areas such as fly tipping and graffiti removal but that recycling remained underdeveloped (Audit Commission, 2005b). Litter and rubbish, and parks and open spaces, were the two main areas of environmental concern for residents and are discussed in more detail below.

7.4.2.4 Litter and Rubbish

Street cleaning was a concern of residents, some of which was affected by how rubbish collection was carried out because some refuse collectors would drop bins and create litter. In 2002 there had been a particular focus on improving the coordination of street cleaning and refuse services:

I think there's been closer cooperation on the kind of street cleansing enforcement side. I would say that that's, that's pretty good. I think there's been a genuine commitment to do that.

Interview, NDC Officer 3

The Commonwealth Games in East Manchester in 2002 was also seen as a turning point:

Our sort of approaches to street cleaning. I think a few things have been important. We've invested heavily in terms of parks and open space. We made sure that different maintenance regimes have happened. And we can't have done that without in terms of seeing a real shift in terms of attitudes within grounds maintenance, leisure services, in terms of making sure. I think one thing the Commonwealth Games did in 2002, one of the many things, it gave the City Council an understanding about the importance of good quality open space and good quality street cleaning and the impact that can have on people's view on life, health and wellbeing and pride in an area. And I, there's still a long way to go but I think the quality of those services is far better than it was in the beginning.

Interview, NDC Officer 1

The percentage of residents who thought that litter and rubbish was a problem in the area dropped slightly from 33% in 2002 to 28% in 2006 and in 2007 the rates for Bradford ward being judged by residents as being free from litter and refuse were the same as the Manchester average, at 62% (Ipsos Mori North, 2007). This was an ongoing challenge however: feedback forms from small scale environmental improvement projects and a workshop on outcomes of projects found that residents generally thought they were positive, but street cleanliness and litter were still a problem (East Manchester NDC, 2007). An Audit Commission report (Audit Commission, 2006) commented on the need to address some services such as street cleaning which were underperforming and there were small areas where cleanliness was a problem, such as those with large numbers of absentee landlords (Audit Commission, 2005b). This was corroborated by resident interviews:

Dustbin men, they won't move a dustbin if there's something sticking out the top of it. If half of it falls on the floor while they're throwing it in the back of the wagon, it stays on the floor... Every time they send the little motorized sweeper

round, half of the people are parked up in their streets when they come around. It doesn't get swept. If there's an inspection of the area, if we've got visitors, prime ministers and stuff coming into the area, well there's a massive clean up. It will last for a couple of days.

Interview, Resident 6

It's grass cutting and street cleaning. Now we did very well, we did very well for a good while. We get litter picked now, we don't get swept. ... We have a waste bin outside a shop. I live six foot from that waste bin. Now summer holidays, that's being filled in two days. Cos people are actually using the bin. But then they won't come and empty it for a fortnight.

Interview, Resident 1

One main challenge was, despite reorganisation of services, funding remained limited:

I think the biggest thing what lets us down is street cleansing. And that's all down to money. They'll do the street cleansing once a week. But they can't give it every day because of the money side of it.

Interview, Public Service Employee 2

Of street cleaning, one manager defended the service:

We do our own internal quality monitoring, performance monitoring. And we're scoring about 8 out of 10 for standards, and I think it's that 20% where we know we've got to improve and that's what the residents are picking up on.

Interview, Public Service Manager 7

Issues such as this also partly depended on factors such as high fly tipping levels in Bradford ward compared to the Manchester average, which created greater challenges for services (Manchester Partnership Team, 2008).

7.4.2.5 Parks and Open Spaces

Overall perceptions of parks improved over time. The percentage of residents who thought poor quality or lack of parks or open spaces was a problem in the area fell from 21% in 2002 to 14% in 2006. Some of the improvement in satisfaction with parks is likely to have been due to NDC-funded refurbishment rather than a reflection of improvements in their management by public agencies such as the Leisure Department of the local authority. In 2007, satisfaction with parks and open spaces in the same survey was 65% in the Bradford Ward, compared to 73% for Manchester (Ipsos Mori North, 2007) though with respect to cleanliness satisfaction was lower: an NDC survey in 2007 found nearly half of residents surveyed thought the cleanliness of parks and open spaces was not very good or 'bad'. Residents felt there were problems with maintenance, particularly with glass on the ground (East Manchester NDC, 2007). Maintenance was an ongoing problem which detracted from some of the improvements that had been made:

Leisure services were not engaged in delivery early in the programme, an oversight that Beacons struggled to rectify. Once engaged there was not close co-operation between Groundwork, Leisure and Beacons leading to differences of opinion on design and selection of materials. No Service Level Agreement was brokered with Leisure Service leaving unresolved maintenance issues.

(Beacons Environmental Programme Evaluation Report 2007: 23)

Residents felt similarly about this problem, that services were not keeping up with maintenance of parks and open spaces:

They've got this environmental programme where they've just, they've done bits and pieces with gardens and stuff but the follow up has been rubbish. They've been left and neglected, and it's all been done in a blaze of glory and then [whistles] nothing.

Interview, Resident 2

That was the biggest mistake and even [NDC Officer] will tell you this. We should have had SLA [Service Level Agreement] with Manchester Leisure regarding the parks which we didn't. So even though we put millions in the vale, the parks,

playing fields, there is no guarantee that they'll keep this up after NDC's finished. But if there's an environmental project manager still with New East Manchester there's some hope that they can monitor it. I'm not a big fan of Manchester Leisure and Parks. I think they're lazy. I'd like to know where they spend their money.

Interview, Resident 4

This was not a new occurrence, as this excerpt from the initial NDC delivery plan documents records:

Whilst significant investment in the physical environment has been targeted at the area, in Beswick in particular, many of the initiatives have failed to secure long term lasting benefit. Many of the environmentally improved sites have degraded once more as maintenance has failed to address increasing levels of misuse and vandalism.

(East Manchester NDC, 1999: 15)

The current problem was in part due to a problem Manchester Leisure had with a maintenance subcontractor late in the programme, since parks in terms of physical infrastructure had significantly improved (see Appendix III). The parks had contractors responsible for maintenance, who were based in the centre of Manchester and had no direct contact with residents. This distanced the service and created problems for responding to problems, as it had to be mediated by managers from Manchester Leisure. Furthermore, specific contracts defined the limits of work carried out and meant additional work to address problems was not always possible.

7.4.3 Limitations in Improvements

The description of improvements in environmental services above is mixed; this was due to services fluctuating across area and across time. There were two principal reasons for this, a lack of proactivity sometimes in services, and a lack of sustainability of mechanisms for supporting service quality. Thus while network brokers and ties functioned to enable resident aspirations to result in changes in services, residents had to be constantly engaged with services to ensure service quality whereas, as noted earlier, their preference was for the quality of services to be more automatic. The

sustainability of services was also compromised by the instability of networks due to staff and resident turnover.

7.4.3.1 Lack of Proactivity

As noted above, although services had improved in some respects in the area, resident preferences were not necessarily to have large amounts of contact with services but for services to function well enough that residents would not have to make complaints:

If you ring them up and ask them to come out they will come out and will do a walk round with you and have a look. And they'll send the men in, do the work, but it's still, it's not maintained. The problems are it's not done on a regular rolling programme. And it gets to the point where you're tearing your hair out.

Interview, Resident 2

Respondent: Street cleaning. Terrible problem with, now they're very very good. But, every now and again, oh I'm saying, it used to be every week we used to ring up "You've not swept the streets". "Oh we'll come out", and they'd come out, but we asked.

Interviewer: But you had to ring them to get them to do it?

Respondent: Every time. Every time.

Interviewer: And is that the same with grass cutting as well?

Respondent: Yes, we still, they still, they're still not there on a regular basis, environmental services. They will do it, and very good when they do it, but we're always pushing them.

Interview, Resident 3

Public agency representatives showed little understanding of this perspective of residents, and tended to take a view that local residents needed to take an active role in the provision of services in the area:

If you see something dumped, you might have walked past it before, now people are more informed, they see that the area's improving, the house values improved, they're not living on a street of boarded up properties, I don't want things getting

back to how they were, they're more likely to challenge the neighbour. "Have you reported that, is that being picked up? Right, I'm just checking, I'll check tomorrow if it's still there." You know, that type of attitude. And that's what you need to change, more than services being better is the attitudes of people isn't it?

Interview, NDC Officer 4

Resident: What provisions are there for litter? It is a big problem in the area.

Public service employee: You can chase it up with us

Resident: Why can't you put in an application and chase up enforcement yourselves?!

Public service employee: Officers are proactive, they are out several nights a week but they have to cover the whole of Manchester. We will target a problem if people phone in with complaints.

Fieldnotes, NDC Meeting December 2007

7.4.3.2 Lack of Sustainability

The sustainability of service responsiveness and improvements across a wide range of local services was affected by staff turnover and the consequent ongoing dependence on NDC as a broker. While brokers in services were highly valued, they were unstable aspects of networks as individuals would move out of the area, move jobs, and so on:

Respondent: Unfortunately with public agencies the turnover of the people at the top is quite high.

Interviewer: And what...?

Respondent: It doesn't give you a chance to build up, you just start to build up a rapport with them when they get moved to another position or they move to another area or something like that.

Interview, Resident 2

The just one up and down one is the Jobcentre Plus model which is very interesting because they were nowhere... and a breath of fresh air came to it, and a woman called [name] breezed into town and she was marvellous ... she lived

and breathed New Deal from day one. But it was short lived. She was, because she heading towards retirement, she had this Indian summer of 18 months of reform.

Interview, Council/Local Government Officer 2

We'd phone up and someone would come or whatever, or it would be a different person. We've had good and we've had bad. And you know when you've got a bad one. And you know when you've had a good one. And we had a lad who'd actually come, they piloted, he actually come to work at New Deals and everybody could talk to him because he covered all the area. Then they do things like they changed the ward and they changed the personnel and then you've got to start building up another relationship and, "Oh, I don't do your area now I do this other area". You know, and that pains me. When you do build up relationships and they just suddenly move them, you know, because another area needs doing. And then you get someone that may be not as good as what you've had before. But you still expect the same. And when they don't, that's when you kick off! [laughs]

Interview, Resident 1

7.4.3.3 Immutability of Service Cultures

Despite the cultural change initiatives implemented by the NDC programme, there was little evidence that significant cultural change had occurred in local public services. Brokers and network ties brought about change but this had little or no impact on cultural change in organisations. Individuals in public services made a difference to how far they engaged with NDC programmes (Fordham et al., 2010). This 'personality led' approach was seen as a weakness sometimes because it was based on individuals rather than cultural change in the organisation (East Manchester NDC, 2004a). Two interviewees commented on changes in services being due to individuals rather than institutional cultures:

We had a restructure of health... and up popped [PCT Chief Exec] who was very good. And she actually, at the same time as the police had put a decent superintendent [name]. They, they actually got on very well with each other and they were the first two public agencies, public servants if you like, to turn round to [NDC Officers] and say "Actually, it's our problem this, isn't it? We're the

mainstream service deliverers, we should be doing more". And that's great. Problem was they both then got promoted. And that's one of the dilemmas, that you sort of form relationships with people rather than institutions and then people get moved on.

Interview, Council/Local Government Officer 2

Despite the progress being made, the Partnership still finds itself frustrated by the ability or willingness of some agencies to play their part. Some are conspicuous by their absence; others willing to listen but not participate; some do participate if the new ways of working are led and funded by NDC; others are fully signed up to the principles and committed to action. Often participation is down to the personality of the individual concerned and their personal commitment. However, once these individuals move on, we have to start from scratch with the new representative, to persuade them of the value of participation and to bring them up to speed... Action by NRU and Government is required to persuade and enable organisations to participate.

(East Manchester NDC, 2003: 62)

There was only one instance mentioned by an interviewee where a particularly good public service employee had had a longer term impact on the way a department ran, but even this was through employing individuals rather than changing a broad culture:

They're [services] they're more amenable, to. The public services that the majority of us actually encounter like Operational Services and the Benefits, Jobcentre Plus, they now listen. ... [Name] was the first person from Operational Services who actually reacted to residents in a very positive way. He got jobs done for us. And everybody was singing his praises. So the bosses from Operational Services realized "that's the way to go". So they put more people like [name] in place.

Interview, Resident 4

Residents retained a mistrust of the local authority and of services, that they had not really changed in terms of organisational cultures, that services had already slipped back into old practices after the peak of the NDC programme and would continue to do so to a greater extent after the programme period:

Fieldnotes, NDC Meeting January 2007

A resident comments that with the local council there has been a drift back to a lack of attention paid to residents, and they don't consult. This attitude is creeping back. Residents need to go to meetings where top people from local services are. Residents need to keep attending to stop services going back to their old ways.

Agencies did, did, some of them did bend but you could see at the back of their minds, they was thinking "Well we'll do it your way but once we don't need to speak to you we're going back to our old ways", which was happened with a lot of agencies.

Interview, Resident 11

Residents therefore felt a need to maintain pressure on services:

I think we have to keep, what's happened is, sometimes we've had a new regime at the police station and sometimes that's not as responsive as it used to be. I think we need to be, stay on top of that. I think again social services, education and welfare are again crying off doing things because they're saying there's no money to do things like that. I think they need to be kept, to be pushed.

Interview, Resident 1

I can see signs that they [council services] are creeping back into their old ways and they still need to be kept in check... You cannot sit back again and just let the council do what they wanted which they did before.

Interview, Resident 4

Some variation in services over time could also be explained by the variety of initiatives and pilots which were being launched in the area and which were subject to change. For example, both SEMs and Clean Teams (both of which targeted incidents or particular problems) were piloted in the NDC area by agencies. There were two service areas where funding for an initiative had been supported by residents and funded by NDC, often as pilots, but then mainstreamed, resulting in the loss of resident influence over the service. The first was the Wardens service was piloted by NDC and then taken over by the housing association Eastland Homes.

Initiatives could be subject to change over the NDC period and in some cases gradually slipped out of residents' control. The wardens programme was subsequently funded by a Crime and Disorder Partnership and because of this gradually changed its focus from environmental issues to crime. This meant that wardens did less daytime work and more evening work as wardens were patrolling more at night time, when more crime took place but when the older, active residents were not usually outside, leading to resident complaints that they were not visible on the street. The wardens' area of operations also expanded, leading to less coverage in the original NDC area and a greater use of vans rather than foot patrols. These changes reduced the visibility of the wardens, particularly to the active residents, who felt the service was being reduced. Residents raised this concern in local meetings but a full explanation of the changes was not provided, with the service representative denying change had occurred:

Fieldnotes, Local Meeting August 2007

Residents bring up the issue of wardens, which has also been raised in other meetings. Residents don't see the wardens as much, though maybe they are around. Are they doing tasking for the police rather than being visible in the community and doing things for the community? A crime programme officer answers that the warden role hasn't changed. A resident says "It seems to have done". Several residents feel that wardens are less visible. The crime officer replies that tasking hasn't changed in the last 4 years. The wardens are now spread across a wider area now, which may be why they are less visible. They did have slightly low numbers for a while but are back up to normal numbers now. A resident objects to wardens driving round in a van, because they are supposed to be visible in the community, to which the crime officer replies that they have to use vans because of the large area that they cover now. Another resident says that although they don't see wardens, if they phone them they arrive within ten minutes. A resident suggests that PCSOs should be addressing crime issues, and the wardens should be concerned with community issues rather than drifting towards doing crime work. The crime officer responds that the wardens are fine, "That's from me". But the resident says he wants the wardens, and will take the issue back to his residents.

The second example of residents losing influence over a service concerned local CCTV services, installed using NDC funding to reduce crime. This service was mainstreamed

and subject to the local authority restructuring how they delivered services, as the monitoring of footage was eventually carried out by the local authority rather than local contractors. The Council encountered funding problem which led to a poorer service and they eventually decided to centralise monitoring in order to cut costs. Residents only became aware of changes when they noticed apparent reductions in the service. Residents were not consulted about this change. In order to challenge the management of the CCTV service, residents had to use NDC's influence to invite a representative to attend a local meeting to discuss the service with residents:

Fieldnotes, Local Meeting April 2007

A resident is concerned that CCTV cameras are not working in her area. A representative explains that changes that have been made to the CCTV system in Manchester. The service is short of funding, leading to some cameras not being repaired and is also being centralised in order to reduce costs. A resident replies that residents should have been consulted about the changes, "Once again, a high up decision has been made...", especially as residents had funded CCTV in their area through NDC. The local CCTV representative thinks the service is currently understaffed and will lose its 'personal touch' where local residents can ring him and ask for cameras to be targeted at particular areas. A police officer asks if the manager of the CCTV service could attend a local meeting in East Manchester. A debate follows about how to get the representative to attend, as she has been reluctant, saying she is too busy. The police officer thinks "Without getting too political" that there is an accountability issue at stake. A resident says that they should insist on her attendance. The police officer and an NDC officer will follow it up.

The CCTV example demonstrates wider concerns existed amongst residents not just about the levels of service but about the sustainability of the influence they had over public services in the longer term. The 'drift' in both services mentioned above where quiet changes were made without consultation demonstrates that there were no guarantees of continuing resident influence and highlighted the fact that the difference between a successful instance of resident influence and change and a failed one may just be length of time.

7.4.3.4 *Continuing Need for NDC as Broker*

Because changes in services were unstable due to the reliance on staff who were not necessarily a permanent fixture, rather than cultural change in institutions, the role for NDC as a broker remained. However, NDC was a temporary programme and there had been a sense amongst residents and NDC officers that there would be a loss of contacts and influence after the end of the programme:

My biggest fear now is as New Deals fades out, which it's going to be doing, that we won't have that power any more, and we won't have those connections and stuff.

Interview, Resident 5

We have raised people expectations here, in terms of residents' expectations. And that won't change. In fact it will increase won't it? What will happen, what might happen is there won't be the people like us there to facilitate that process. Residents might find additional challenges occasionally because people might find there's less pressure to be able to do that, or there's less motivation to do it. Because you know at the end of the day everyone, most people have really quite pressured jobs in terms of the time they have to do the particular task they have to do... And what could happen without that motivation and that reminder or that enforcement role, is that, that might be one of the things that gives occasionally.

Interview NDC Officer 5

Some residents thought they had built up enough local contacts with services to ensure responsiveness after NDC had left:

Respondent: At the moment it's handy because we can call round; they [NDC] know the people to contact, and that's fair enough. But when they're gone we've got to do it ourselves. So it's building that structure where we know, even if it becomes phone numbers and people we can approach on issues

Interviewer: Would you be happy with just that?

Respondent: Yeah, yeah. It's information, and sometimes information is a little bit of power! I mean that's half the battle. If you know the right person to talk to rather than having to go through six different cut-outs. If you can find somebody

that can deal with the situation then hopefully you can go to them and at least launch your complaint or whatever it is you want to try and resolve.

Interview, Resident 8

This ensured contacts at a local rather than strategic level however, and depended on individuals who were willing to be contacted.

7.4.4 Summary

Various improvements to the local environment occurred during the programme period. Physical infrastructure investment was provided by NDC, and public services engaged in maintenance improvements, although these were uneven and subject to slippage. Residents could lose influence over services during the mainstreaming process, and maintained a distrust of services and the local authority. The lack of proactivity and lack of sustainability indicate that services did not change far or for as long as residents would have liked. Residents wanted services to perform without their having to complain, while services would have liked residents to have become more active in maintaining the environment. NDC filled this gap to an extent, but officers and residents were conscious of the temporary nature of this solution.

7.5 Network Brokers and Ties in Context

This chapter has so far discussed resident aspirations, processes of change and outcomes in services. The previous sections have outlined processes of change where brokers and personal aspects of their relationships in particular have enabled local residents to influence public services, despite institutional constraints and overall lack of change in public service cultures.

There were also other factors which brought about change in public services already mentioned, including greater prestige and attention brought to the area by the initiation of a high profile (and reasonably well funded) regeneration programme; accountability in meetings, piloting and co-funding of projects by NDC which provided impetus to improve services; and the ongoing development of public services driven both by

internal factors in departments and national level initiatives. The role of network brokers and ties in bringing about change in local services was therefore just one factor, but was perhaps less recognised because the processes of governing through network ties often occur in informal, peripheral spaces.

The use of network brokers and ties could also be seen in the context of the wider use of networks beyond processes of resident participation and influence. Actors also built network contacts outside of the NDC network; the NDC network was therefore linked to other networks and bridging and other brokering functions were used more widely in the area. Residents occasionally built links with other groups in their area or other groups involved in regeneration in other areas; both of these links provided them with useful information:

People have banded together more. I know people from parts of the area I would never have met before where it's a network of, you've got the network there now that if someone's got a problem you can always find someone who can help you and steer you in the right direction of how to go about getting it solved.

Interview, Resident 2

Public service staff developed also contacts with other services in different ways, and maintained contact:

Respondent: I built a good relationship by being out on the street and being proactive out there and just, I would say a matter of months with the Street Scene Services.

Interviewer: And do you mean by being proactive and being out there, do you mean, just making time to chat with them and getting to know them, or do you mean what you were saying earlier about being conscientious about following things up?

Respondent: Both. Both, yeah. I do out there and make myself, I mean, they'll see me in the streets now and flash their lights and give me a wave and stuff like that. And it's all about working together.

Interviewer: And what about, say with Highways who are based in the Town Hall. Was it harder to build up good working relationships with them because you don't see them as much maybe?

Respondent: No. One of them made the mistake of ringing me up on his mobile so I stored his mobile number. Well that's a big mistake. I store all numbers. So, Highways is pretty, you're constantly on their back on Highways. But eventually they do get there.

Interviewer: But you have to be persistent?

Respondent: Persistent, yeah. And I am very persistent and very tiring. I'll wear them out!

Interview, Public Service Employee 3

Service staff often used these links and the good relationships, encouraged by joint working initiatives, to enable them to improve the overall levels of services in the area:

I work very closely with street scene services and if I've got a problem and I usually rectify it there and then. Street Scene Services,[name] and his team they'll pull out the stops for me because I've a good working relationship with them. ...Because I've got such a good working relationship with all the agencies, well it tends to be, it's a lot better than when I first started because you had to build these links.

Interview, Public Service Employee 2

The use of direct ties was not limited to residents and ground level staff. Senior service staff and local authority employees also said that they used network ties with people in other departments or organisations to bring about change in their culture or practices, using informal means through individuals who were sympathetic to their aims:

Interviewer: ...you're trying to change a culture of services and how much weight do you have behind you to do that?

Respondent: I don't know whether I just use my charm and disposition.... It's about trying to find all the like-minded people in different ways, supporting them as much as possible and then hopefully they'll carry on.

Interview, Council/Government Officer 1

Fieldnotes, Local Meeting March 2007

A service manager comments to me after the meeting that the main work of Public Agencies Forum will not be done at the meetings, but rather through the relationships that will be developed and on specific issues identified.

This suggests that the use of ties in networks to bring about change is more universal and operates at different levels, in addition to more formal processes of governing.

7.5.1 Summary

This section has considered the use of network brokers and ties in context. Participation processes occurred through the use of network brokers and ties, and enabled residents to influence public services. There were, however, other routes of change for public services, and also wider use of networks in governing.

7.6 Conclusion

Overall the NDC network enabled direct contact and improved ties between local residents and public service employees which was highly valued by residents, and was the predominant theme in their idea of how public services had changed in their area. The number and quality of network ties between residents and public services also improved over time which also met an aspiration of residents since they had wanted better communication and relationships with local services, possibly because they perceived from the outset that this would lead to improvements. Residents sometimes expressed frustration that they felt they had to keep continued pressure on services in order for them to maintain an acceptable standard, and no significant change occurred in public service cultures. Processes of change which occurred through brokers and network ties took place in a wider context of change in the area, caused by various factors, and within a wider context of the use of network ties more generally in public sector organisations.

Environmental services, which were the focus of the case study, made small improvements the life of the regeneration programme according to most research

participants, although improvements were uneven over geographical area and also tended to vary over time. Survey data tended to indicate small improvements. This may indicate the very local nature of resident influence through brokers and ties, since this would not have a large impact on the area overall. The small scale of changes may also indicate the relative size of an intervention such as NDC, which while significant is still small compared to the resources of a local authority.

8 Discussion and Conclusions

8.1 Introduction

This thesis addressed the research question: how can the influence which residents may exercise on public services, through their participation in governance networks, be explained by reference to the role of brokers and network ties? The objectives were to explore the dynamics of a governance network with respect to both structural constraints and the agency of actors, with particular reference to the role of brokers and network ties.

The findings presented in the previous three chapters have shown how the case study regeneration programme could be conceptualised as a governance network comprised of actors who were steered by central and local government and who were based in different institutional contexts, resulting in various constraints for resident influence. However, by expanding actor-centred perspectives and exploring the role of individuals in the network, particularly as brokers, governing processes and resident influence could be explained. Furthermore, the relationships between these brokers were also significant in promoting the influence of residents over local public services, particularly through the development of strong ties. While brokers and network ties promoted resident influence over public services, they were unstable and limited in scope to the local level however. This chapter discusses the theoretical, methodological and policy implications of these findings.

8.2 Implications for Governance Perspectives

A governance perspective was adopted as a theoretical framework because it articulated the involvement of non-state actors in governing (Kjaer, 2004) and thus provided a perspective which addressed participation in decision making processes for public policy and services. Governance perspectives also embody the concept of network which was central to this thesis and which proved critical to exploring participation

processes and outcomes. Institutional approaches can be applied in a network context as was shown here. However, governance perspectives have tended to adopt other theoretical approaches such as institutional theory in order to explain governing dynamics or change, and can incorporate a multiplicity of theoretical perspectives while remaining somewhat theoretically hollow itself. This thesis has shown that social network theory concepts can be used to explain the dynamics of change in governance networks. Thus combined with the other theoretical approaches, social network theory within governance perspectives can explain actor dynamics within an institutional context. In this way, governance perspectives can explain resident participation and influence with respect to the agency of actors within a structural context, thus providing a correction to current approaches which tend to emphasise structural constraints.

This chapter makes four main arguments concerning participation within governance networks: firstly, that an understanding of who individuals are and how they behave as brokers within governing processes is important for understanding resident influence, although the context of network arrangements of institutions is an important one; secondly, that furthermore strong ties between individuals have an impact on governing processes and outcomes; thirdly, that the structures of governing networks are shaped by individuals, not just by government design, and that as a result governance networks extend into informal and peripheral spaces, a feature which is often coupled with the operation of strong ties in governing processes; lastly, that resident influence through regeneration may be limited to the local level but this has very mixed implications for any judgements about resident empowerment.

8.2.1 Governance Networks and Social Network Theory

This thesis argues that a more detailed understanding of how governance networks are structured and operate, as network arrangements of individuals, can explain some of the processes and outcomes of resident influence through regeneration programmes, notwithstanding the constraints of institutional structures, cultures and the unequal resource distribution across governance networks that disempower residents. Although governance perspectives have emphasised ‘networks’ (Rhodes, 1997), to date governance perspectives have not analysed to a sufficient degree of detail what governance networks *are* as arrangements of individuals and how this affects processes

of governing, especially in terms of governing outcomes. This thesis has used social network theory to articulate in more detail the network aspects of governing and thus provides a way for a governance perspective to explain governing outcomes. In this way, an explanation is provided which describes the processes and outcomes of participation in a regeneration context and demonstrates that participation outcomes can be explained, at least in part, despite conceptual and methodological challenges.

Despite governance perspectives being broad and having to import other theoretical approaches in order to explain the dynamics of governing and change, social network theory being one additional theory, the use of these approaches together explain both structural constraints and the agency of actors. This perspective provides an account of micro-processes of resident engagement and influence within a socio-political context of the changing relationship between citizen and state.

8.2.1.1 Institutional Context

Much has been made of the new institutional arrangements of governing and the rise of 'networks' in favour of hierarchy or markets (Newman, 2001). The NDC network was a hybrid form of governance network (Lowndes and Skelcher, 1998) since governing occurred both hierarchically and through the participation of non-state actors. Governance networks are complex sites of overlapping institutions, bound by weak ties (Lowndes, 2001), and the dynamics of governing occur within this institutional context: of organisational cultures, the community contexts of residents and the behaviour actors who use strategies to achieve aims within this setting. Tensions between managerialist tendencies such as service targets and community development-based participatory policies, discussed in Chapter Two, were managed by actors (Newman et al., 2004), and active residents engaged strategically to try to improve the quality of public services in their area.

The case study regeneration programme exhibited typical institutional constraints to resident influence in many ways, and residents engaged creatively in order to adapt to a public sector culture while remaining true to their own aims. What is perhaps more surprising is that despite the efforts of NDC initiatives and various changes in individuals who acted as brokers for residents, overall public services cultures appeared

to have changed little. This says something generally about the immutability of cultures of some organisations in the public sector and perhaps the significance of centralised targets and resource limitations that affect them, but also demonstrates that changing individuals one by one or hiring individuals sympathetic to the idea resident participation is an inadequate approach to changing a service. Similarly, the training, persuasion and demonstration tactics of NDC had little impact on a large scale. This may suggest that more formal or top down approaches are needed to fundamentally change public service cultures.

8.2.2 Brokers

Particular individuals within the NDC network were critical for the processes of resident influence, as actors pursuing their own aims based on their personal histories, values, beliefs and so on. These brokers tended to be actors in the network with particular characteristics. This is a normal pattern in a public service organisation: some will be more conscientious than others. However, they also functioned as brokers in various ways, actively shaping the network by creating bridges between individuals and groups (Purdue, 2001), creating peripheral areas of the governance network, creating communication channels, resolving conflicts and advocating for residents. Contacts in meetings often expanded to direct telephone contact for example. Brokers had commonalities in terms of their characteristics, and being able to form bridges between groups. They developed understanding, promoted communication, and were empathetic. This was often recognised by residents who were very clear about which public service employees were good communicators and were helpful, and which ones were not.

The evidence presented in this study suggests a wide variety of people can make a difference as brokers, and that there need to be brokers in different groups and levels in a network. The NDC programme and its officers were a particularly important broker. It functioned by design as a broker because of its status and position within the local governance structures and because it provided various forums in which residents and services could meet. The NDC programme was placed in a position of having good links with the local authority and through them local services, and was also designed to engage residents. Some public service environmental staff were also intended as having

brokering roles since their job was to coordinate residents' aspirations and joint working amongst services.

Compared to services such as education or the police, environmental services were relatively well placed to provide local staff in the area who could function as brokers and who had a reasonable amount of discretion to enable them to be responsive to local concerns (Smith et al., 2006). Unintended brokers arose more organically through active residents maintaining links with neighbours and residents who were not involved, and through some service staff choosing to communicate or advocate for residents to a greater degree. These were not necessarily intended or recognised as an extension of governing but they facilitated communication and advocacy in the same way (if not as powerfully as NDC) as other brokers.

Brokers volunteered to become part of networks to a degree: residents volunteered, NDC officers were invited because of their skills in participation partly and some were attracted to the programme, public service employees had less choice but some took up participatory practices more than others. NDC officers, public service employees and residents were often driven by varying personal reasons to become involved in local governing, and these reasons were shaped by factors such as personal or career histories.

There were a variety of broker positions at different points in the NDC network, with varying roles which promoted resident participation, such as communicating aspirations, following up requests, advocating when services did not respond adequately and promoting accountability. Brokers often had unofficial roles in managing different elements of participation within regeneration, particularly active residents who communicated with non-engaged residents. Network governing provides more space for actor discretion, which makes personal judgements and values more important for how public services deliver; this aspect of brokering was significant in public service employees who sometimes used discretion to engage with residents to a greater degree.

Networks of individuals were overlaid on institutional arrangements of the governance network, since individuals were operating within the arrangement of institutions, organisations and groups which made up the NDC network. There were interactions between the two: for example, the unofficial role of some brokers such as NDC was to manage tensions in the programme between the metagovernance of the state through

funding rules and performance targets while promoting resident participation (Whitehead, 2003). Brokers were significant for promoting resident influence in a context where institutional cultures and the 'rules of the game' were not always conducive to resident participation.

While brokers were beneficial for residents, they were temporary often. The residential upheaval in the area may have had an impact on the ability of active residents to maintain ties to non-involved residents. Particularly frustrating for NDC and residents was the tendency for good brokers in public services to be promoted and leave the area. Regeneration programmes could also be said to be unstable brokers in an institutional sense as well, as they are temporary interventions and programmes such as NDC are time-limited; however, broker roles and positions were particularly unstable as the lengths of time they occupied broker positions were often relatively short.

Brokers therefore existed in various levels of the governance network and came from diverse groups; their commonalities were characteristics which enabled them to bridge different groups and individuals, and to facilitate governing processes such as conflict resolution. They had more opportunities to do this in different parts of the network, such as in NDC which was designed as a broker and in environmental services which were decentralised. This points to the necessity of understanding individuals in governance networks in terms of their characteristics and roles, in both formal and informal spaces, since these may contribute significantly to governing processes.

Brokers may be of more use or significance in some types of governance networks, for example where there is more of a need to reach out to potential participants in informal spaces (such as 'hard to reach' groups for public services), where there are greater measures of freedom for actors or decentralisation where actors are able to use discretion in making decisions in governing processes. They may also be more important in governance networks where there are power imbalances, where brokers may be able to compensate for institutional constraints places on less powerful actors.

8.2.3 Networks Ties

Governance networks can be conceptualised as networks of organisations bound by ‘weak ties’ (Lowndes, 2001). The NDC partnership built up a network of relationships of weak ties, creating more contact between groups and individuals, often initially through meetings. This contact also became more direct, through face to face contact and residents using direct telephone numbers of service staff. Both the number and quality of ties improved and strong ties were formed; greater resident influence occurred through strong ties to bring about change through exchanging information, through greater understanding and responsiveness, and through more personal forms of accountability. These ties, in some cases, improved understanding and enabled actors to overcome their institutional cultures, for example where greater contact and understanding led to improved acceptance of resident perspectives and views. Improved relationships led to reduced conflict although assertiveness remained, managed sometimes through humour.

Network ties must be seen within their institutional context since they helped actors overcome institutional contexts, for example by encouraging services to respond to requests for services where services had been reluctant to consider residents’ perspectives before. Strong ties bridged the differences in how services perceived the value of resident information, whereas public sector cultures had tended to devalue it. Personal accountability also developed through strong ties which motivated services to respond. Strong ties also operated slightly outside of cultural practices and norms of formal organisations which made communication for residents easier. However, while strong ties formed they did not coopt actors to the degree where actors lost sight of their own aims and perspectives: services did not lose their professional consciousness and residents did not lose sight of their overall aims of influencing services to deliver better quality services in their area.

As with brokers, network ties were significant for network governing, and point beyond formal, rational modes of interaction in governance networks to more personal ones (Barnes et al., 2006). Governance network perspectives tend to refer to interactions and relationships in networks in terms of formal, rational, negotiation and debate. However, residents did not always communicate or engage in the NDC network in this way, due to strong feelings about services in their area. Furthermore, strong ties are more

personal and less formal than traditional ideas about network interactions but were significant for network interactions. Weak ties have been discussed in the literature in terms of their utility (Granovetter, 1973); this study has explored the interactions and relationships in governance networks which go beyond weak ties, rational exchange or negotiation in formal environments and which are dependent on strong ties. For residents, it was often strong ties which produced the greatest amount of change in public services, often by enabling public service employees to operate outside of their institutional context, and was the route for change that suited residents best in many ways because it required less time than other methods such as attending meetings.

The literature on ties has suggested that residents are 'better' at strong ties (Clark, 2007) and are less able to form the weak ties necessary to engage in local governance networks. A case could also be made that strong ties were especially appropriate in a regeneration programme which was engaged at the very local level and was involved in relatively personal aspects of residents' lives. Strong ties are associated with personal, often family, ties and are seen more naturally to belong in the personal sphere. In informal spaces strong ties may have developed as a result of the extension of generation programmes into the personal space of residents at a street level, where public service employees engaged with residents in more personal, local spaces such as people's front gardens. Strong ties may have been easier for residents to form since more formal interactions in a governance space dominated by public sector cultures may have been intimidating. However, strong ties linked residents and public services more widely than this, developing in formal and informal governance spaces, and were not therefore limited to the personal sphere. The distinction between strong and weak ties, what contexts they emerge in and their respective utilities does not hold in this context, in terms of weak ties existing in public realms and having more utility than strong ties (Granovetter, 1973). Strong ties and the more affective aspects of relationships may be more significant in governance networks than has been previously realised. In more formal governance spaces, weak ties often developed into stronger ties as actors became more familiar with each other and interacted outside of formal governance environments such as meetings (Barnes et al., 2007). Governance networks could therefore be said to be made up of both kinds of ties, possibly changing over time as relationships developed. Furthermore, public sector staff also used strong ties to influence services, indicating this was not only appropriate for residents who were less

able to engage in formal governing spaces but that strong ties are used more widely in governance networks.

One aspect of ties which changed over time was levels of trust. Trust is often mentioned as a feature of ties in a network (Boviard, 2005), as a distinctive feature of governance networks compared to the competition of markets or the command and control of hierarchies (Sorensen and Torfing, 2007). Trust in this case study, however, was not present immediately, since residents had a deep distrust of the public sector which never entirely left them, and initially were also cynical about regeneration. East Manchester NDC built up relationships of trust with residents early on in the programme, and built bridges between services and residents. Resident trust of services also changed over time to a degree once changes in the area were witnessed; this however was an outcome of changes in services rather than an inherent feature of network interactions which preceded action. Interaction and engagement in the NDC programme at the beginning was based more on interest in the funding available for the area. Trust, therefore, was not a key factor in bringing about change in services. This further suggests that weak ties initially formed, based on rational actor interests of gaining access to resources, and that these developed into strong ties over time, with trust becoming an element of these ties.

The findings here have shown that strong ties also have a utility in that they are part of processes which enable residents to influence services. This is not to say that strong ties were manipulated by people, however, but that they changed how service staff understood, empathised with and responded to resident aspirations. There was no evidence that residents developed more personal relationships in order to encourage better resources from services, though they did develop a greater number of direct contacts for this purpose and these developed into more affective ties. Furthermore, residents actually began the programme with a fairly hostile attitude towards services. Similarly, one could argue that services developed more personal ties with residents in order to coopt them. However, public service employees tended to report on the value of affective ties as being beneficial for job satisfaction.

The data presented in the previous three chapters indicates that a theory of governance networks should recognize the role of these individuals and the importance of their characteristics, especially the ability of some individuals to link others, and produce

change through strong ties. While this view is fairly actor-centric, it provides a balance to structuralist approaches of sociological institutionalism and the narrow view of human nature of rational institutional explanations. It also expands the ability of governance perspectives to account for governing outcomes and change. Network perspectives on their own do not supersede institutional approaches but a combined social-rational-network model explains governing processes and outcomes to a greater extent, particularly if one is examining change, by accounting for institutional arrangements and how actors operate within them.

8.2.4 Peripheral Governance Spaces

This study also makes comment on peripheral governance areas and the informal nature of these governing spaces, an aspect of governing which is not currently addressed in the governance literature. NDC as a policy programme opened up a network, some of which was instituted formally and some of which expanded into peripheral, informal spaces. The operation of brokers and the role of network ties often occurred in informal, peripheral governing spaces rather than in formal meetings. These spaces were critical in engaging some residents who did not attend formal meetings and pointed to the value of public agencies and services having a presence in a local area, including street patrols but also local, welcoming offices.

Peripheral, informal spaces were coupled with the operation of brokers and strong ties. Brokers were actively engaged in shaping and expanding the governance network by building contacts in informal, peripheral governance spaces, such as one-to-one meetings between individuals on the street, in homes or in personal offices, or through phone calls. The informal and peripheral spaces of governing were also coupled with the use of strong ties with affective aspects, especially at the very local level, as personal ties developed more easily in these spaces and personal contacts developed, through exchanging telephone numbers for example. These governing spaces were therefore important for the dynamics of governing and for residents' influence over services, as communication often occurred here.

The development of peripheral, informal governance spaces was a result of actors creating governance networks in part, and even within state-sponsored programmes

such as NDC in which governing was designed and managed, actors nevertheless created additional governing spaces which bridged formal policy making structures and local communities. The distinction between formal and informal, peripheral governance spaces is slightly artificial because many informal links grew out of contacts made in formal meetings, and often communication overlapped and occurred during the same time period in a variety of ways in both arenas. Informal governance spaces were therefore overlaid on formal governance structures to a certain extent. Some communications in formal meetings for example, could be quite informal, especially when chatting after meetings had finished, and relationships became more familiar and personal through interaction in these arenas often.

Services had begun to formalise local, more peripheral networks to act as a way for active residents who registered with the scheme to report problems and provide services with information. This was initiated in response to the ways in which participation had emerged organically in the area, and had some benefits for residents such as being less time consuming than attending local meetings. It did carry risks however, since these networks would provide services with local information without their having to attend meetings where discussions could take place or where they could be held publicly accountable. Government support for networks can also intrude into personal space and damage the very informality of networks (Taylor, 2004).

8.2.5 Power in Networks

Resident empowerment was conceptualised in this study as resident influence over public services, acknowledging that there are wider aspects of power in this policy context but which were not addressed by this study, such as governmentality perspectives for example. Factors such as the metagovernance of the state, the culture of public services created obstacles for resident influence and as such were constraints on resident influence (Newman, 2001). Unequal distribution of resources also restricted residents' influence (Klijn and Koppenjan, 2000). However, residents were not powerless: power was held by actors throughout the NDC network, occupying different spaces and operating through different individuals, particularly brokers. For example while the culture of public services tended to result in resident perceptions being assigned a lesser value sometimes, residents also used the status of NDC and its

community participation ethos to advocate for their right to be listened to. Additionally, while services tended to be the holders of resources, they also needed resident approval to an extent for their own legitimacy, especially in a changing culture where satisfaction survey results were of some importance. Additionally, while they were attending public meetings, residents could embarrass them in front of peers by pointing out their failings. Residents also provided valuable local information, especially for the police and environmental services, which made the job of services easier often. Power, therefore, was not transferred from state to residents but was a feature of myriad, unstable relations between actors.

Power was explored here in terms of changes in services (evidence of resident influence), a process of instrumental participation where resident aspirations may or may not have resulted in changes in public services⁸. Residents achieved some of their aims, indicating residents gained some power through NDC, although not to the extent they would have liked. Influence was attributed to brokers and to the more personalised relationships between residents and public services; these were one way in which residents exercised power although this tended to occur at the local level. This was in a wider context of influence through formal meetings and through changing cultures influenced by NDC, mentioned above. Influence was a critical issue for residents; more widely in NDC programmes, residents were prepared to engage if real change was a possibility (Fordham et al., 2010). A variety of routes to change services, reflected in the various preferences residents had for using meetings or direct contact, empowered residents by providing them with options but did not address the key aspiration of residents to not be obliged to contact services to receive services of sufficient quality. Influence therefore occurred through a variety of routes but was limited for residents in some respects.

The use of strong ties in networks could be interpreted as reflecting negative aspects of resident empowerment. The use of network ties could be seen as inferior because of the risks of clientilism or as a way to bring about superficial change rather than changing organisational cultures. The local level and temporality of network brokers and ties

⁸ Resident participation and the development of relationships provided opportunities for residents to influence services but also carried the possibility of their being influenced by services, or for the cooption of residents into public sector agendas. This aspect of power dynamics was beyond the scope of this study however and is not discussed here.

restricted the ability of residents to change services at the strategic level or over the long term. Networks may also exclude some people and thereby disempower them by distancing them from decision making processes. However, networks worked well for most residents and staff at the very local level. Networks and the personal aspects of network ties are appropriate for regeneration programmes which engage with local residents, since they are extending into the personal lives of residents to a degree, many of whom are unable or unwilling to engage formally. One could conclude that network ties, especially those involving more personal relationships, are particularly appropriate for local residents in deprived areas who may have less experience of professional environments. While the limitations of local level, strong ties are that they do not result in strategic level influence, they nonetheless have utility for residents.

8.2.6 Summary

This section has discussed the theoretical implications of the findings in this study. Governance networks have been described as arrangements of actors from different institutional backgrounds who engage strategically within constraints. Governance perspectives have used other theoretical approaches in order to explain governing dynamics; institutional theories have tended to explain lack of change and have tended to take relatively structural approaches. This thesis has drawn attention to actors in governing, through embedded rational actor perspectives and social network theory. Embedded actor theories have drawn attention to how actors engage strategically, although this perspective also tends to describe constraints to resident influence. Social network theory has highlighted the role of broker and strong ties, often operating in peripheral spaces, in enabling residents to influence governing outcomes. Taken together, these theoretical explain governing dynamics in terms of structural constraints and opportunities for actors, within an overall governance network perspective. Implications for how power operates in governance networks were complex, as residents gained power in some respects but were restricted in others.

8.3 Methodological Implications

Research on participation and governing outcomes has been limited by methodological challenges. This study has attempted to research this area using a theory of change framework and a detailed case study methodology, and argues that methodological approaches can provide a more extensive understanding of participation processes, network dynamics and outcomes in governing, even if identifying causes in an exact and comprehensive way is not possible.

The conceptual framework adopted for the collection and analysis of data was a ‘theory of change’ model, which explored processes and outcomes together in order to try to explain change. There were competing narratives about improvements over time, such as why resident participation levels had fallen and why satisfaction in services had not increased as much as it might have done. While this conceptual framework was used to combine processes and outcomes to produce a holistic account of resident influence and impact on services, linking processes to outcomes was challenging because of the various causes for change that were apparent through interview and observation data, and due to the complexity of participation processes.

This study demonstrates the value of using an a case study and ethnographic approach to researching public policy processes, as it enabled the type and level of detail of data collection necessary. There are various overlapping benefits of case studies and ethnographies, such as collecting data from a naturalistic setting; the ability to use mixed methods which were useful for collecting breadth of data for a complex and long-standing programme, and also for data triangulation. Triangulation was particularly useful in a context where there were several different sets of actors with varying perspectives and interpretations of events. Beyond this, ethnographic approaches also captured cultural aspects of the research site which was important because institutional cultures were an area of interest. This approach also captured detailed data about informal aspects of governing and strong ties, which would have been difficult using other methods. Ethnographic approaches also address contexts; this was important for this study where actor-oriented processes of change were being explored within an institutional context which had a significant bearing on participation dynamics.

There were limits however: some processes of resident influence (or lack of influence) were not recordable because of informal nature of exchanges and complexity of network. Because some processes occurred in informal arenas through telephone conversations and chance meetings, it was impossible to collect all the data required. Furthermore, detailed record keeping was not universally comprehensive in recording the progress of resident queries and requests in various meetings and public service departments. Collecting and analysing data on processes of change and linking them to outcomes for participation was challenging, because identifying causes of outcomes was difficult and participation processes were always not linear. Discussions of participation processes were also limited by the difficulty of identifying outcomes which were concrete, as outcomes for improved services were not always identifiable in terms of when a service had improved sufficiently and for how long, for example. In addition, ward boundaries and performance target regimes were subject to change over time, making longitudinal data difficult to collect and compare.

Environmental services were comparatively straightforward to research in terms of resident participation and influence because they were a universal service which residents had a high level of interest in, issues were uncontroversial and residents tended to agree on what the problems were. Furthermore, environmental issues were often concrete, discrete, short term and easily identifiable, for example grass cutting or bin collection on a particular street was either carried out or was not; this made the identification of aspirations and outcomes easier than for some other services.

The reliability of data from case studies is a weakness of this method, and limited claims are made here about how applicable the findings are to governance networks more widely, or even to other regeneration programmes. There are dangers in making too many judgements about governance networks from a single case study; there were many features of East Manchester which made it exceptional. The East Manchester NDC was deliberately selected case study and was 'ideal' since it had a good reputation for implementing participation policies well and had not suffered some of the major problems that other NDC programmes had. For example, some NDC's saw public services withdraw from boards because of poor relationships with the community and their priority of their own nationally set targets (Lawless, 2006b); these local problems would have affected ties between actors in the network. East Manchester NDC had stability of staff, stability of active residents, a long lead-in time through which to

establish resident engagement before the formal launch of the programme, successful participation initiatives, other programmes and development in the area contributing to regeneration and participation opportunities (and disappointing residents in some cases). It had a largely white population which is not true of many other urban regeneration areas. All of these factors would also have affected the nature of network ties between actors in the area and may be different in other areas and regeneration programmes.

The findings about the detail of relationships and their role in participation processes individuals could be researched in other areas however, as there are already indications in the literature that these are important to residents (Maguire and Truscott, 2006), and that more personal relationships are used for influence in formal organisations by other groups apart from local communities.

Implications for methodologies in future research on participation, particularly in regeneration programmes, are that ethnographic studies are useful for collecting data on complex processes that occur in policy. These methods are perhaps particularly useful in researching the state-citizen interface where various policy processes in cultural and social contexts require a sensitive and detailed study, and could be used in other policy contexts. Additionally, ethnographic methods employed with theory of change frameworks could be used more widely in evaluation to capture processes in order to explain outcomes. The disadvantage with this method is expense due to its time-consuming nature; however participatory policies are themselves expensive and currently cannot be justified by research data on their effectiveness.

8.4 Policy Implications

This section explores the implications of the findings for participation, regeneration and social exclusion policy.

8.4.1 Resident Participation

Regeneration in Britain, particularly the New Deal for Communities programme, has promoted participation to a greater extent than other policy areas, with a multiplicity of

policy aims, rationales and concepts, sometimes operating in tension with each other. This created a context which has provided residents with opportunities to influence local public services, albeit within the constraints of a government-steered programme. However, a minority of residents participated and few were interested in wider issues in their area, instead focusing on local issues often limited to their own street. The majority of residents did not participate although some had informal links to active residents and existed on the periphery of the governance network.

8.4.1.1 Active Residents

This study has not explored resident participation in an area in its entirety but has examined what processes occur when residents do engage. The focus has therefore been on engaged, or ‘active’, residents. The ways in which residents may be active residents, non-active or somewhere in between highlights the lack of utility of the concept of ‘community participation’, since individuals in communities engage in different ways.

Furthermore, active residents in some ways embodied the ‘active citizen’ or the ‘good community’, as discussed in Chapter Two, in that they volunteered their time to participate in local governing, and often also in local community projects to improve the area. This also reflects in part the changing role of local authorities towards steering rather than delivering services (Corry and Stoker, 2002; Kooiman, 2003). They were also restricted by the ways in which NDC was metagoverned and how public services were subject to centralised control through resources but also performance management regimes. Residents could not participate in major decisions about capital funding or resource distribution across the city. The cultures of the public sector also created further constraints, as residents had to communicate with them in particular ways. However, residents engaged strategically: for example, while certain behaviours were prescribed such as volunteering or behaving in an unemotional way in local meetings, residents adapted to these requirements in order to pursue their aims of improving their area. Weak ties created communication channels with services, and where these developed into strong ties service responsiveness improved. Residents remained fixed on their aspirations for improved public services and demanded greater input from them, despite those agencies often trying to encourage greater resident input to resolve resource limitations.

While active residents engaged in the programme based on community-oriented values, other residents often behaved much more like individualistic consumers by demanding services or engaging for personal benefit rather than as ‘good community citizens’ with a wider perspective, although they did not identify themselves as consumers; this draws out the tension between New Labour’s public services modernisation project and its communitarian philosophies of ‘good communities’ (Dinham, 2005). Similarly with new public management’s influence on the public sector and managerialist ways of framing services, residents often resisted these discourses, valuing their own perspective and local knowledge over statistics for example. Residents did behave as active citizens then, but on their own terms in many respects.

Residents largely existed in ignorance of the policy world and ideas about the good community; NDC officers translated policy and communicated with them in more everyday terms. Residents tended to be more interested in affecting outcomes which had a bearing on their more immediate material existence and safety, such as the environment, crime and state of their housing. The main struggles in meetings were over services and who would put more resources into resolving problem, residents or services. Although active residents were comparatively community-minded, they often resisted the call to contribute to improving their area, and demanded more from services instead. One could argue this is justified since:

Involving people in running their own services is time-consuming and irrelevant, dumps the responsibility for failed services on those least equipped to cope with that responsibility and fails to involve the bulk of the population. The real task has to be to improve the quality of existing services and their management.

(Taylor, 2000: 1029)

NDC eased some pressure in the struggle over resources in the short term, but the main aspiration of residents was for improved service levels which remained the responsibility of mainstream services.

The use of brokers and improving relationships brought residents and services closer together. Networks opportunities emerged where there was a high motivation for residents to become involved and where it also suited services: residents wanted better services and services used resident information. While capacity building to assist

resident engagement in formal structures is recognised, the use of network ties indicates that social networking skills are also necessary for participation in governing. This, like other skills, separates active residents from others: those who already have them are the ones most likely to participate and improve their skills further, thus addressing social exclusion for some groups rather than others.

8.4.1.2 Non-Engagement

While East Manchester NDC ran events and initiatives which encouraged local residents to participate, there were typically a limited number of residents who became very involved in the NDC partnership; many residents did not attend. This is typical of participation patterns nationally. Resident engagement was voluntary and shaped the network: a small number of active residents participated in the NDC and local governance networks, while some residents were secondarily linked to these structures by the active residents who acted as bridges between them. These non-involved residents were indirectly involved in governing, in a non-visible way. Some residents engaged temporarily in order to solve a very local problem affecting them, and would not participate once the problem was resolved. A larger number of residents were not engaged at all, and many had not heard of NDC.

One could regard this as a lack of community spirit or disengagement from services, but one could also argue that networks form through voluntary engagement to take on a certain, inevitable shape, and that the active residents who act as bridges to non-involved residents are important to the functioning of the network rather than achieving blanket coverage of resident engagement. Links between residents and services through brokers could be supported or encouraged instead, in order to promote greater engagement. This is a different way to look the problem of non-participation, to address the links between those who are involved and those who are not rather than being too concerned with how many people participate (Jones, 2003). If this is a normal pattern for participation and governance networks to form this natural arrangement, then the more relevant question for policy makers is not to include as many residents as possible. Some residents will never be interested in community activities, and it is more useful to concentrate on supporting those engaged and encouraging those who are likely to be interested, rather than condemning 'inactive' residents. The more relevant issue for

participation in local decision making is how well active residents are linked to other residents, and whether they can communicate between residents and public agencies. This method is the one which reaches more residents ultimately and which many residents may find easier to engage with. There is then the question, however, of how far government should intervene to promote or create these types of network links which typically emerge informally.

However some residents will be excluded through networks as well as being excluded in formal governance arrangements, as some residents may find it difficult to access some networks, especially informal ones (Newman, 2001; Taylor, 2003a). Active resident involvement tends to be reinforced through repeated engagement:

Partnerships tend to involve prominent and 'well-connected' key players: community leaders, voluntary sector professionals or local authority officers who are able to influence decisions through their contacts with politicians and funders. Access to such networks is rarely either transparent or equitable, and can be a major source of resentment and discrimination
(Gilchrist, 2004: 117)

While active residents may be privileged in this respect, their ties with non-involved residents reduce this exclusion to an extent, as do direct street contacts between ground level staff and residents.

8.4.2 Improving Services

The need to improve services in deprived areas has received less attention than it might have done, partly due to the construction of area deprivation in terms of pathological communities (Blackman, 1995) where deprivation is seen as resulting from community or area deficiencies rather than public sector or policy failure. NDC was partly aimed at reorienting public services but found it a challenging area and not as straightforward as spending its own budget to improve the area. The difficulty residents had in producing significant change in services reflects the relative weight of resources and metagovernance issues which affect services, as well as institutional constraints (Taylor, 2003a).

The findings have been constructed by exploring actor accounts of how change has occurred together with what resident aspirations were and whether these were realised, using data complementarity and triangulation to build the explanation of change presented in this thesis; other interpretations are possible however. The findings presented here have emphasised positive change as a result of resident participation, as the aim of the study was to explore resident influence. Furthermore, the case study selected was ideal as it had successfully implemented participatory policies. These positive changes have to be seen in context however, firstly that improving services through networks occurred in a wider context of improvements, through formal meetings and debates, and through the status of NDC especially at its outset, and overall continual development in public service departments: the use of brokers and ties was not a sole cause of change.

Findings presented here therefore form a partial theory of change for the case study regeneration programme which was a complex social intervention with various internal and external processes and constraints operating. This account also only forms part of an account for causes of change in local services. There were various causes of change which were difficult to weight and which interacted with each other. For example, environmental improvements were brought about by NDC funding and advocacy, alterations in public service approaches driven by national initiatives (such as new legislation or the Green Flag scheme for parks, for example) and closer relationships between residents and ground level staff. Failures by services to respond to residents could be explained in terms of institutional constraints such as the priority of national targets, a culture of devaluing resident information or perspectives, and as such would constitute a 'theory of failure to change' although this formed a context for network governing perspectives. Network perspectives formed a theory of how change did occur by focusing on actors in networks. This theory of change is not intended to advocate actor-centred approaches over more institutional accounts of participation, regeneration or governance, but to account for the agency of actors beyond a rational actor perspective, in the context of the rules and cultures of institutional arrangements.

This thesis has presented data which demonstrate how brokers and network ties facilitate resident influence over public services. Furthermore, the peripheral spaces of governance networks were areas where brokers and network ties operated often. The policy implications from this data are that the role of brokers and ties between

individual actors should be promoted and protected, particularly those ties that link residents to important brokers. This could take the form of recruiting staff with characteristics of good brokers, such as empathy and communication skills which are important for forming strong ties. Providing job roles where actors can form strong ties through a presence in informal, peripheral governing spaces would also facilitate network forms of governing, including the presence of offices in local areas which are accessible to residents. Policy cannot prescribe behaviour in informal, personal areas and in any case could risk formalising and damaging strong ties in networks, but promoting certain types of personnel in services and particularly in public agencies which bridge residents with the public sector would contribute to the building of strong ties.

Contributing to a local governing network, as East Manchester NDC did, contributed to improved services which met resident aspirations to some degree rather than fully resolving issues about service quality in deprived areas. Empowering residents to demand better services, perhaps in a more equal way to wealthier areas where people complain more often or more confidently, provided residents with some means to addressing social exclusion in their areas. The recruitment of actors into governing processes can have a positive effect on services (Kjaer, 2004). However, it did not empower them in the sense of giving them freedom to use their time to pursue other interests rather than having to attend meetings and communicate with services in order to ensure a certain standard of service delivery. This suggests that focusing on the quality of services to a greater degree than on large-scale participation might be a more productive way to address social exclusion.

Services varied in how they responded to the NDC programme and the promotion of participatory practices, reflected in the mixed views of residents about how far they had influenced services and how much they had improved. Some services remained distant from the NDC and other local groups, such as education and social services, although education services used other participatory mechanisms such as parent governors. Other services which delivered services to the general community such as libraries, the police and environmental services tended to engage with participation initiatives to a greater degree. The police were subject to national targets and practices however, and their engagement with local residents varied and was not always perceived by residents to be adequate.

Environmental services were relatively successful in responding to residents because they were fairly decentralised and many staff had been given relative autonomy, indicating that institutional arrangements do open up opportunities for resident participation and influence. They also had supporting patrolling staff which enabled better communication with residents and ensured services would address with local problems; in doing so staff were able to form part of local governance networks by providing staff to attend local meetings with residents and using local patrolling staff and ground level staff to interact with residents on the street. Where maintenance had been contracted out and staff delivering a service were removed from both managers and residents, the quality of the service suffered. Other services which do not have as many staff at ground level who could form a presence on the street, or which have more complex policy issues to address would find it more difficult to create or become part of local networks in and provide a responsive service the way that the environmental services did.

8.4.3 Limitations to Influence

This section discusses several limitations to the use of brokers and network ties to influence public services.

8.4.3.1 Social Exclusion and Network Inclusion

This study has indicated, rather than residents having too few ties or the wrong sort, there were a multiplicity of ties between residents and between residents and services in the case study area, both strong and weak ties which both had utility, as noted earlier. Brokers who build network ties could therefore be seen as reducing network exclusion in their area.

These network ties provided residents with opportunities to influence public services. One could view this in two ways: do network ties empower residents because they provide a convenient route through which their aspirations can be communicated to public services and acted upon, or is it an example of the very limited choices that residents have in influencing public services, if they cannot do so through more formal mechanisms and instead depend on unstable methods of influence and the goodwill of

public service employees? Networks, particularly with respect to strong ties and governing in informal spaces could be said to be more appropriate for local residents who were unfamiliar with formal governance cultures and practices and therefore beneficial. The use of brokers and network ties were empowering to an extent in that they enabled residents to bring about changes in services, but were often the only route they had access to. While some residents may have preferred these routes to influencing services, this could also represent exclusion from more formal governing environments, if residents cannot enter these spaces easily. They could also represent an additional burden if residents were obliged to use them in order to receive public services at an adequate level, and thus increase rather than reduce social exclusion. There is a question, then, of whether the use of broker and networks to influence services was empowering or represented a lack of power of residents.

This dichotomy assumes that informal governing through network ties and more formal governing processes of rational debate were completely separate, while some of the data collected indicated that network ties were used more extensively between services and within the local authority as a way to influence people, where they used network ties with people in other departments or organisations to bring about change in their culture or practices, using informal means through individuals who were sympathetic to their aims. Therefore, the invitation to residents to become involved in the formal structures of local governance, namely public meetings, provided them with an opportunity to engage in the kind of universal networking that possibly has always existed in governing. This suggests that the use of ties in networks to bring about change is more universal and operates at different levels. The implication of this is that weak and strong network ties between residents and public service employees should be promoted at all levels, including strategic levels.

8.4.3.2 *Local Level*

Network brokers and ties operated largely at the more local level, especially between ground level staff and residents; this resulted in residents being able to influence very local decisions, such as grass cutting or street cleaning, rather than strategic issues such as how budgets were allocated. The ways in which network ties operated at a very local level mirrors wider aspects of ways in which resident influence is restricted with respect

to being able to influence strategic level decisions more generally in participatory policies, such as resident largely attending meetings at the local level.

The fact that the programme, and the building of network ties, operated at a very local level had both benefits and drawbacks. The local nature of the governance network was one of its strengths because proximity and face-to-face contact between actors was often necessary for relationships to be developed, relationships which appeared to be one of the factors driving change. Many residents preferred to influence services through network ties because this method was less of a burden than other types of participation, in terms of time commitment for example. The local geographical level was also of the most interest to most residents who wanted change in their immediate area and were less concerned about wider issues: local issues tend to relate to people's lives more directly (Burton, 2009). Contact with a patrolling environmental worker was useful for solving a litter or vandalism problem on a resident's street but not for having an input into how the local authority's environmental budget was allocated, but very few residents had an interest in wider strategic issues in any case.

Local regeneration programmes and local networks had even less influence over national level issues which affect social exclusion. For example, Geddes (2006) argues that the inability of NDCs and LSPs to produce any real change in public sector services indicates the predominantly liberal concerns of government which is not concerned about addressing the more structural aspects of social exclusion. Network processes, while they were useful at a local level for residents, did not have any impact on larger issues of social exclusion. Network ties could be promoted between local residents and higher levels of governance, however, in order to promote more strategic influence.

8.4.3.3 Temporality and Invisibility

Brokers were unstable aspects of the network because of turnover of public agency employees and, to a lesser extent, residents. The absence of a broker would mean cutting off communication channels and links to people who could advocate for residents or hold services accountable. The consequence of this was that resident influence depended on relatively unstable features of the governance network, and could not be relied upon in the long term. NDC officers were relatively stable but the

programme itself had a limited funding period, and was a significant aspect to resident influence because NDC was a powerful and important broker for local residents. This presented limitations to the longevity of resident influence, as new relationships would have to be built with brokers and in the case of NDC there were concerns that their unique brokering role would not be sustained by any other body. This issue reflects the wider problem of short term programmes and lack of continuity of initiatives which often impede development programmes.

Some of the functions of network brokers and the nature of network ties were also relatively invisible because they were not instituted as formal aspects of the local governance network such as meetings. Some processes occurred in peripheral, informal and therefore less visible governance spaces, such as informal conversations on the street or one-to-one telephone calls. Strong ties and affective aspects of governing, compared to formal models of rational decision making, were also not recognised as being significant (Hoggett and Miller, 2000). This was not a problem in itself but the presence of public service employees in the local area was important for building network ties and was not necessarily recognised by policy makers, making them vulnerable to cuts and consequent disintegration of network ties: informal relationships were not embedded in the design of governance arrangements and could be lost easily.

The instability of brokers and the NDC programme meant influence was temporary rather than representing long term change in residents' influence over services. If there was a requirement for brokers to be present in some form in local areas in order to advocate for residents this would go some way towards mitigating this instability and give residents assurances of having a local advocate for example. This would be likely to promote resident participation more generally as well, since one reason for cynicism about participatory or regeneration initiatives, and for general disengagement, is a perception that such initiatives are temporary and therefore will not result in any real change.

8.4.4 Summary

This section has discussed policy implications of the findings. Implications for resident participation were that residents tend to engage with services in ways that promoted

their own local interests while a smaller number engaged for more community wide reasons. Some residents did not engage but nevertheless some in this group remained linked to governing processes through brokers. Others were excluded completely: networks did not engage the entire population. The most important policy issue is not how many people engaged but how many are linked through brokers in networks to governing processes. Implications for improved services were that most residents were interested in more service input into their area rather than volunteering more themselves and would engage on these terms, but also that they would prefer to not have to participate in order to receive good services, given the choice. Services which were more decentralised and had fewer national targets were better able to be responsive to residents, unsurprisingly. Limitations of service changes were that they remained largely at the local level, since this is where network brokers and ties operated for residents on the whole, and network methods for resident influence were at the local level, temporary and not particularly visible. However, they did enable residents to engage at in ways that suited them and on issues that were most of interest to them.

8.5 Conclusions

8.5.1 Contribution of the Research

This study has built on research which has explored new modes of governing and its institutional constraints which affect resident participation and influence. This study has also drawn on research which has indicated that actors and their relationships are important in participatory initiatives such as regeneration programmes. The research has employed governance network theory in order to explain participation in governing using the concept of networks, and has used social network theory to articulate the structure and processes of network governing in more detail. The study has shown how governance networks form opportunity structures for residents, within limitations due to their local level and instability, and also their wider institutional and structural contexts. This thesis has made a contribution to governance perspectives, particularly to those which have been applied empirically at the neighbourhood level (e.g. Barnes et al., 2007). Within the participation, regeneration and governance literatures there have been

few studies on what participation or governing processes produce in terms of outcomes; this study has provided an actor-oriented account of change.

Several policy recommendations that could be made from this study have been suggested in this chapter. Network brokers and ties extended the range of ways in which residents might influence services, and could be instituted and protected in policy design to a greater degree. In this way, governance networks may expand opportunities for resident influence through formal institutional arrangements but also informal aspects of network governing, through brokers and strong ties.

8.5.2 Implications for Future Research

This study has explored network aspects of governance with respect to the processes and outcomes of resident influence in a case study regeneration programme. There are several indications for future research. Firstly, since this study used a case study methodology there is an obvious opportunity for other case studies to explore whether these sorts of network processes operate in other regeneration programmes or other governance networks, if they have the same outcomes, and what difference any programme difficulties or contexts make to these. The characteristics and the role of brokers could be explored to assess what impact they have on network processes such as negotiation, influence, conciliation and so on. The role of brokers and network ties could also be explored with voluntary sector organisations in partnerships, since the voluntary sectors was not a significant actor in this case study. The different types of network ties, their utility and their impact on processes could also be explored and compared in order to understand in more depth how governing processes operate.

Secondly, network aspects of governing could also be explored through survey research, in order to explore whether brokers and network ties are a more universal feature of governance network processes. Variables could be included on the number and type of contacts individuals have, how important personal aspects of relationships are to public service employees and whether this affects their behaviour at work, and the different types of relationships active and non-engaged residents have with different public agencies. This would provide a broader data set about how brokers and ties operate and may identify significant features of network governing, such as whether particular

features of strong ties have more impact on services compared to others. Quantitative data on brokers and network ties could also be used to compare different types of services or institutional contexts and how these interact with features of network governing.

Thirdly, network patterns of voluntary resident engagement in participation could be mapped quantitatively in order to explore the nature of networks linking residents to participatory and governance structures, and to public services, and how these are linked to local social networks among residents. This might provide more insight into how and why residents engage in local governance structures.

Fourthly, how public agency employees network at work could be explored, qualitatively or quantitatively, in order to assess the extent to which network brokering and different types of ties contribute to decision making processes, and how residents might access these networks.

Lastly, network governing could be further explored with reference to social exclusion, such as a comparison of the utility of ties between residents and different public or private agencies which may provide opportunities to overcome different aspects of social exclusion. Indications that network processes, including those in informal spaces, are significant for influence and that they may bridge the state-citizen interface open up opportunities to explore new ways to reduce social exclusion.

8.5.3 Concluding Remarks

This thesis began by discussing the demand for improvements in public services by residents of deprived area, the role of participatory policies in service improvement and how this might reduce social exclusion. Regeneration programmes have promoted resident influence in governing for local services, in institutionally complex environments which present both opportunities and constraints for resident influence. The dynamics of participation processes in this context have not been well understood, particularly in terms of what outcomes they produce, and there are various ways in which governing processes could be further explored; this thesis argues that networks, brokers and ties are a useful place to start.

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Appendix I: Interview Topic Guide

Below is the topic guide for all interviews; some questions were only directed to individuals in particular groups, for example the question about organisational remit was only asked of public service employees

Interviewee Profile

- Length and nature of involvement in NDC
- Why involved in NDC
- Support and inspiration for involvement in NDC
- Organisational remit in East Manchester
- Length and nature of role in organisation
- How work with the NDC programme
- Role in any NDC/Ward meetings attended

NDC programme

- Aims, priorities and values of NDC, including change over time
- Stage programme is at now, and what future is
- NDC's fit with wider regeneration in Manchester
- How residents engage with NDC
- Role residents have played in programme, including change over time
- Role of the Public Agencies Forum
- Impact of PAF meetings on services
- Any behind the scenes advocacy of NDC
- Any change in services from pilot projects
- Role modelling of NDC and learning from services
- Impact of formal training programmes on services

Community Engagement in NDC

- How ‘community engagement’ [term used by most research participants] is understood
- Different understanding of participation in individuals/organisations
- How NDC has implemented participation over time
- How residents aspirations voiced in meetings, and response
- How the PAF see community participation
- MCC approach to participation, including Community Engagement Strategy
- Tensions between participation and public agency/council aims
- Resident influence on local decision-making over time
- Impact of participation on area
- Any strategies residents use to influence
- How resident information is taken up by services
- Future of participation after NDC ends

Resident Aspirations

- Resident aspirations in 1999, and in 2007
- Fit between resident aspirations, NDC targets and local service priorities
- NDC and service responses to resident aspirations
- What happened as result of aspirations
- Any resident aspirations not realised

Public Services

- Change in delivery of public service and outcomes since 1999
- Reasons for changes; extent to which these changes are due to resident influence; role of intermediaries
- How public service employees make decisions about services. Prompt: resources, targets, professional codes of practice
- How service works with NDC

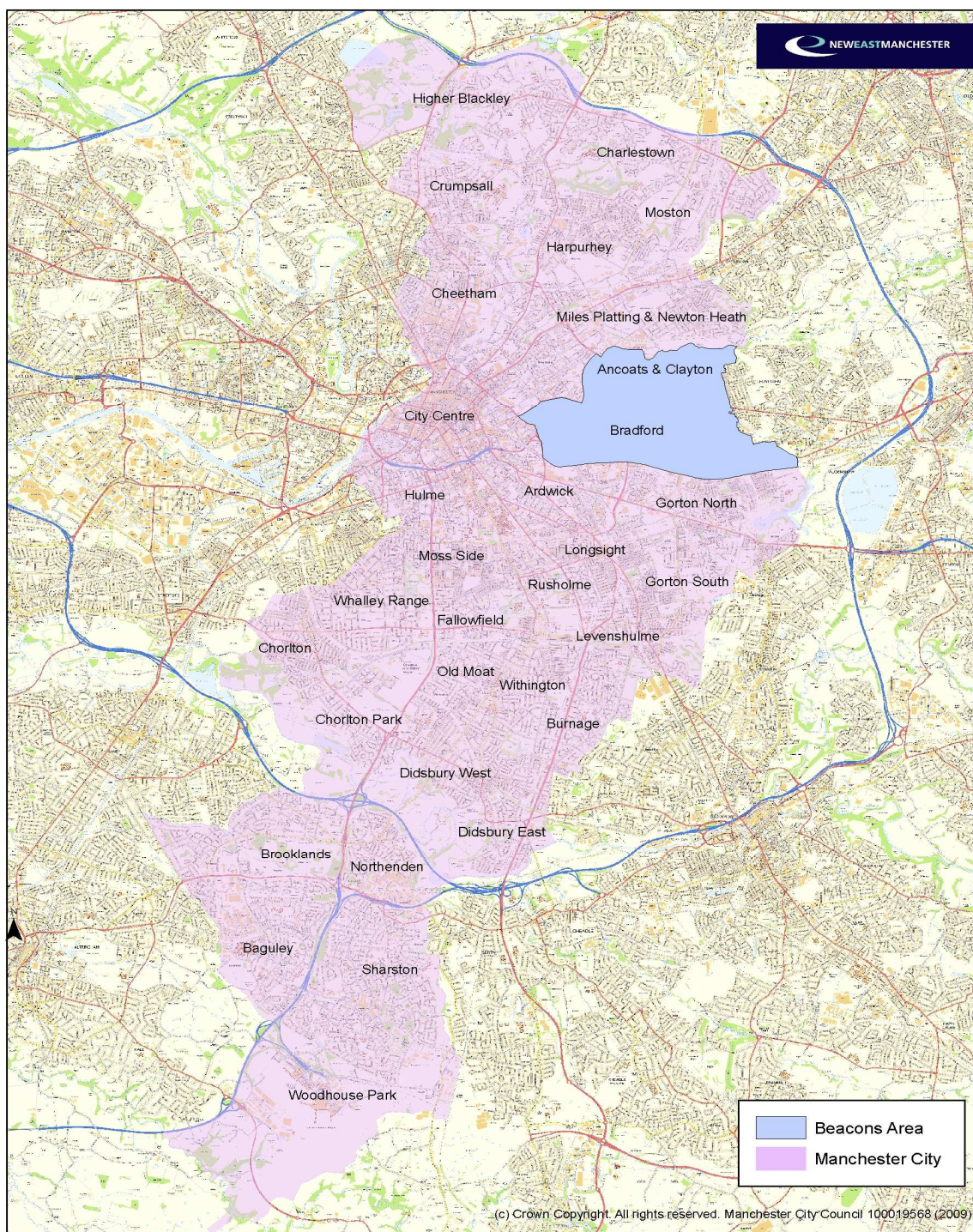
- Any impact of NDC on public services. Prompt: through formal agreements, persuasion, demonstration of projects or approaches, funding, personal contacts
- Role of public meetings and informal/behind the scenes
- Importance of individuals and their characteristics for bringing about changes in services
- How public service employees attend or avoid meetings
- How residents communicate with services
- Importance of public image/reputation to services
- Impact of national policy on service
- Participatory policies within service
- Value of resident information compared to other types
- Role of residents in service delivery and any role of residents as volunteers
- How services balance resident aspirations and other pressures e.g. targets
- What would have happened without NDC and resident input

Relationships

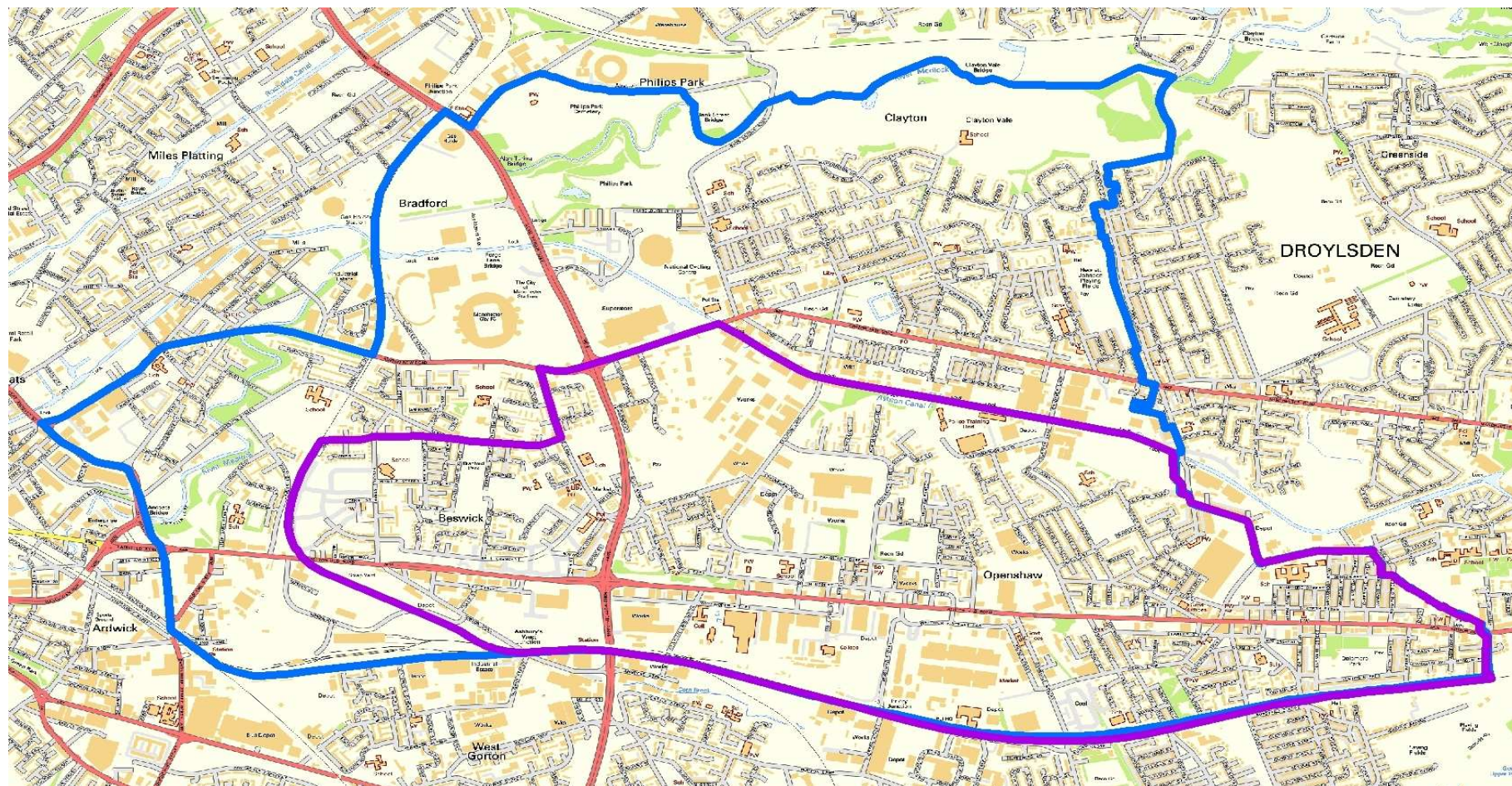
- Relationships between NDC, services and residents
- Relationship between residents and services outside of NDC meetings
- How relationships have changed over time
- Nature and type of communication with individuals
- Role of face-to-face contact
- Effect of staff and resident turnover
- Impact of relationships on NDC and changes in services
- Is face to face element important? Why?
- Open door policy of NDC and changes
- What relationships would be between residents and services without NDC

Appendix II: Political and Deprivation Maps (used with permission from New East Manchester)

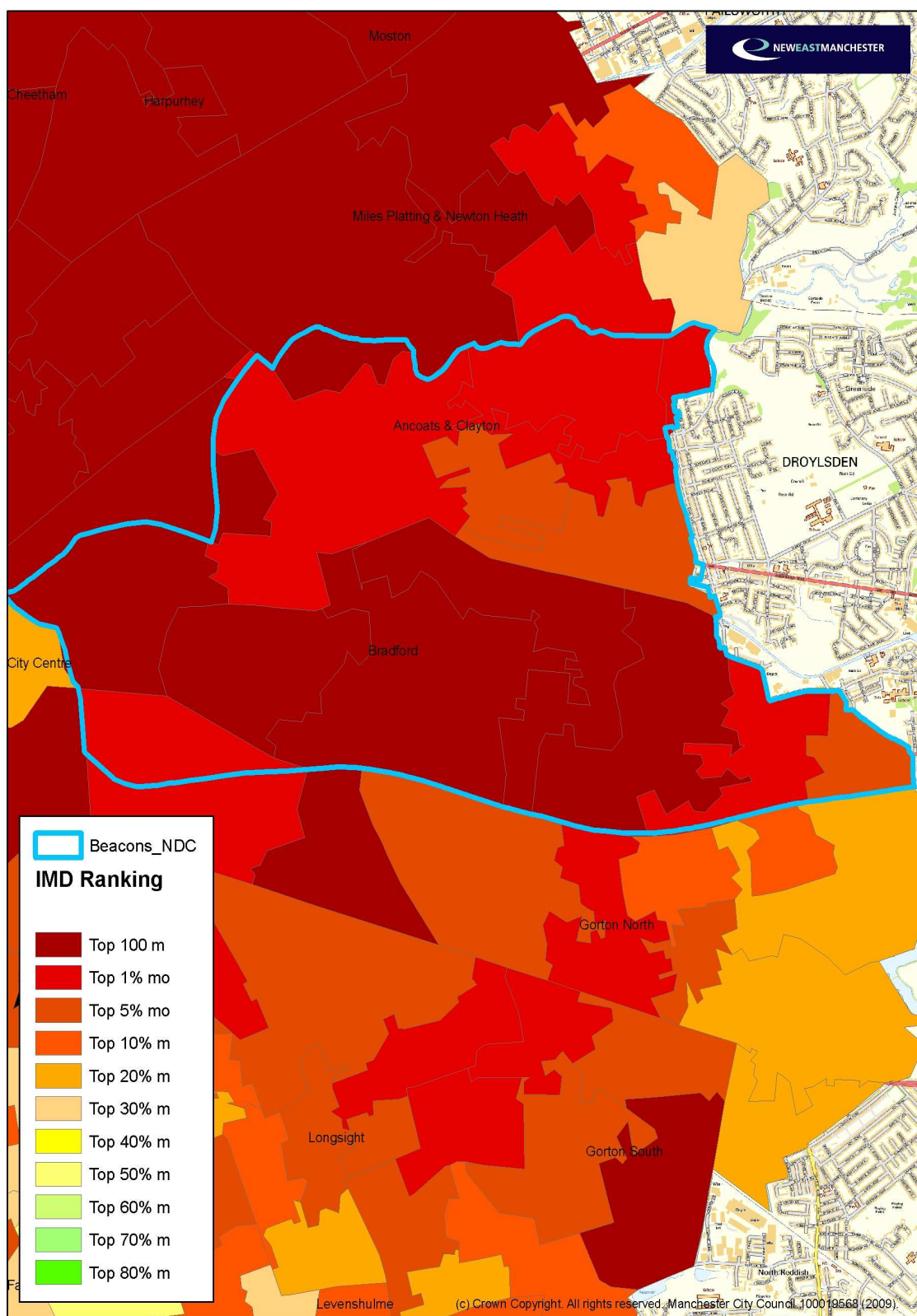
East Manchester NDC Area in relation to City of Manchester



East Manchester NDC area, in blue. At its inception, NDC was located in the Bradford Ward, outlined here in purple, with the remainder in the 'Beswick and Clayton' Ward. Ward boundaries changed in 2004. Beswick and Openshaw areas are in the left and right sections of the purple area, respectively. Clayton is in the top right hand corner of the blue section and Ancoats is in the far left section of the map.



East Manchester NDC and IMD Ranking in Super Output Areas (2007)



Appendix III: 'Before and after' Photographs of Regeneration (supplied by NDC)

'Before and after' example of refurbishment of a community garden



‘Before and after’ example of refurbishment of alleyway behind residents’ gardens



‘Before and after’ example of children’s play area



Appendix IV: Photographs of Housing Development (own photographs)

Traditional terrace row houses; mixture of occupied and boarded up properties



Old and new housing



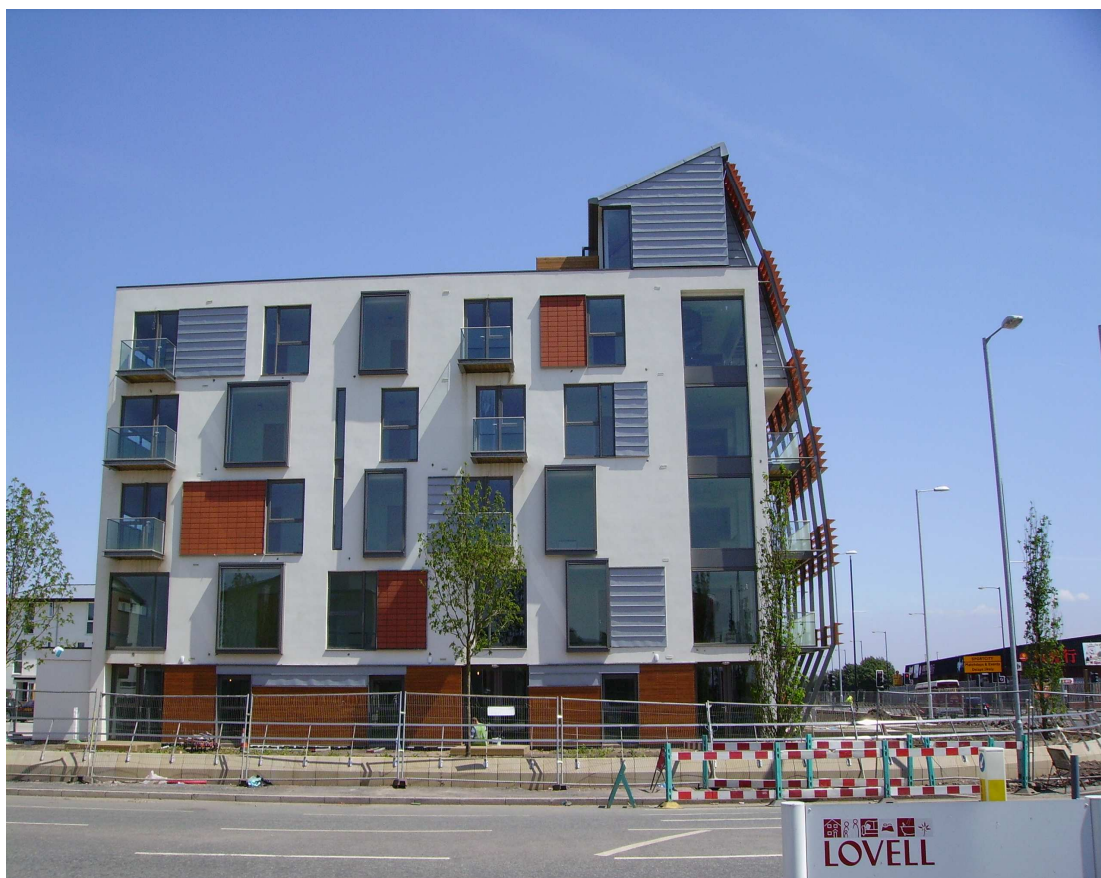
Typical post-war housing in area



Derelict industrial site



New flats on main arterial route through East Manchester



Objections to housing development

